DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 470 EC 162 749

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TITLE Effective State Monitoring Policies (Quality Monitoring and Monitoring of State Operated Programs). A Report of the Handicapped Public Policy Analysis Project. Volume 4.
INSTITUTION Center for the Study of Social Policy, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Oct 83
CONTRACT 300-82-0829
NOTE 108p.; For volumes 1-3, see EC 162 746-748.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disabilities; *Educational Policy; Elementary Education; *Evaluation Methods; Federal Legislation; State Departments of Education; *State Standards

ABSTRACT

The report examines effective state monitoring policies in the education of handicapped children. Following a review, in part I, of the mandate in P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, for state education agency (SEA) monitoring, part II identifies SEA policies to monitor the quality of educational programs (Nebraska, Missouri, North Carolina, California, and Oregon). In part III, SEA monitoring of parallel state agencies are described (Minnesota, Arizona, and Virginia). The growth of interest in methodologies for quality monitoring is noted; this interest exists despite diminished resources for conducting monitoring Each of the eight state approaches is detailed in the appended material. (CL)

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VOLUME 4

EFFECTIVE STATE MONITORING POLICIES (QUALITY MONITORING AND MONITORING OF STATE OPERATED PROGRAMS)

by
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A Report of
The Handicapped Public Policy Analysis Project
(Contract # 300-82-0829)

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October 1983

FC16827A10

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Preface

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142, was enacted in 1975. The statute requires that a "free appropriate public education" be available to all handicapped children (age 3 through 21) in the United States, regardless of the severity of their handicap unless services to children aged 3-5 or 18-21 would be inconsistent with state legislation. The law also mandates that State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) develop special education and related services to meet these children's unique needs. In tandem with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, this law has had, and continues to have, a profound impact on, not only handicapped children and their families, but also the entire public education system.

Implementation of P.L. 94-142 has proven difficult in many respects. While the law mandated major new responsibilities to state and local education agencies, it did not provide detailed federal guidance nor full financing to carry out these responsibilities. As a result, state and local education agencies have had to develop a wide range of new policies to implement the law. In so doing, they have confronted problems and controversies ranging from the consequences of shrinking human service resources and the debate over the rights of handicapped persons, to professional disagreements about the most effective settings in which to educate handicapped children.

Recognizing the importance of providing states with technical assistance to implement P.L. 94-142, Special Education Programs (SEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (formerly the Office of Special Education) awarded a contract to the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) to (1) identify effective policies used by state and local education agencies that serve handicapped children; and (2) disseminate information about these strategies to federal, state, and local decision-makers.

In conducting this project, the Center analyzed state and local policies in five areas of implementation:

- Interagency collaboration;
- Provision of related services;
- Provision of services to handicapped students in out-of-district placements;
- Implementation of the least restrictive environment mandate; and
- State monitoring and compliance activities.

The project design proceeded from a broad overview of policies and implementation strategies developed by states and local districts, through successive stages of data collection. A telephone survey was conducted in all 50 states; follow-up site visits were made to 18 states; and over 400 LEAs recommended as having effective policies were surveyed, with approximately 60 follow-up telephone interviews and field visits to some 35 LEAs.

From these data collection efforts, the project has produced four reports:

Volume 1: Effective State Policies to Promote Interagency Collaboration. The first volume sets forth a perspective on interagency collaboration which applies not only to this volume of the report, but to the other three volumes as well. This volume also reviews the use of state interagency committees, interagency agreements, and other collaborative efforts designed to (1) define responsibilities for services to children in residential facilities; (2) promote local interagency collaboration; (3) assign service delivery and financial responsibilities among state agencies; and (4) share information across agencies.

Volume 2: Effective Policies in the Provision of Related Services. This report documents effective state and local policies in providing related services to handicapped children. The areas reviewed here include those state policies which clarify education agencies' responsibilities, and those which increase the resources available for related services by securing other state agencies' cooperation. This volume also examines local policies which (1) obtain resources from other human service agencies, (2) pool resources to increase the availability of services, and (3) seek to develop new programs for specific population groups such as emotionally disturbed students.

Volume 3: Policies Which Address Out-of-District Placements and Assure Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. This volume examines two important policy areas: the provision of services to children in out-of-district placements and the implementation of the least restrictive environment mandate. State policies are analyzed which help SEAs influence local placement decisions, as well as others which transfer responsibility back to the LEAs for institutionalized handicapped students. This volume also examines local policies which utilize the resources of other human service agencies to implement the LRE mandate. These policies include those through which LEAs develop new programs to enable students to remain in local public schools; others that reflect LEA procedures to allow greater control over placement decisions, and still others that seek to change attitudes about integrating handicapped and non-handicapped students.

Volume 4: Effective State Monitoring Policies. The final volume examines two policy areas. The first focuses on SEA policies that seek to evaluate program quality as well as perform compliance monitoring. The second examines alternative strategies used by SEAs to effectively monitor education programs administered by other state human service agencies.

Support for this work was provided by Special Education Programs, the U.S. Department of Education, under Contract #300-80-0829. Full responsibility for the accuracy of its findings and conclusions rests with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. However, many thanks are due to the officials of state and local education agencies and other human service agencies who gave their time to discuss their programs and provide the information upon which the projects' reports are based. In addition, staff of the Center would like to extend particular thanks to several people whose efforts contributed to these reports. Ray Smiches, the study's initial contract officer at the U.S. Department of Education, helped define the scope of the study and contributed to its work throughout. David Rostetter and Jaddis Franklin, the subsequent contract officers, made numerous improvements in the style and content of the reports. Dr. Kenneth Olsen and Ethel Bright from the Mid-South Regional Resource Center, the University of Kentucky, generously shared their own work, assisted in the Center's data collection efforts, and worked collaboratively in the preparation of the related services volume. Dick Galloway and Beverly Osteen of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education also assisted Center staff in all phases of the project's work.

VOLUME 4

EFFECTIVE STATE MONITORING POLICIES
(Quality Monitoring and Monitoring of State Operated Programs)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most challenging aspects of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) is the requirement that state education agencies (SEAs) monitor all education programs for handicapped children within their state to ensure compliance with federal law. This provision broadened SEAs' responsibilities substantially, and while SEAs have made great progress in carrying out this mandate, they have encountered major difficulties as well. This report summarizes some of the lessons learned from SEAs' experience with monitoring, and then focusses on two policy areas which SEA officials identify as needing further work:

- The need to monitor or evaluate the quality of special education programs; and
- The need to monitor more effectively the education programs administered by other state agencies.

I. THE MANDATE FOR STATE MONITORING UNDER P.L. 94-142

The intent of the monitoring provisions in P.L. 94-142 is to assure a single line of accountability within a state for the education of all handicapped children. To this end, the federal statute required that SEAs monitor local education agencies (LEAs) more extensively; consequently, SEAs have

initiated three year monitoring cycles to determine the extent to which LEAs comply with the policies and procedures established by federal and state law. In addition, P.L. 94-142 required that SEAs monitor educational programs serving handicapped children that were administered by other state agencies. This provision meant that SEAs had to review the educational programs of state-operated facilities and institutional programs -- in many states, for the first time. The mandate thus put SEAs into a new, more difficult relationship with other state agencies.

SEAs' experiences with the monitoring mandate already have generated both a number of lessons and several areas of concern. These include the following:

- Compliance monitoring is one of the SEAs' most legitimate, and perhaps their most powerful, vehicle to influence LEA programming;
- However, SEAs have discovered that not all LEAs require the same level of monitoring. Once an LEA is in compliance, it may be more efficient to concentrate monitoring elsewhere.
- An increasing number of SEAs have concluded that most LEAs now need technical assistance as much as, or in addition to, compliance monitoring;
- Officials in several SEAs argue that compliance monitoring efforts, at least as conducted in the past, have overlooked some qualitative aspects of handicapped children's educational programming;
- Progress in monitoring LEAs has not been accompanied by comparable success in monitoring programs in state-operated facilities.

The knowledge that SEAs have gained from their monitoring experiences seems to be leading toward a concensus that (1)

compliance monitoring remains an essential tool to ensure the adequacy of local programs; (2) the time has come to consider building on, or revising, basic compliance monitoring systems to reflect more qualitative dimensions of special education programming; and (3) the techniques which have proven successful in monitoring local programs must be adapted to ensure more effective monitoring of other state programs.

II. SEA POLICIES TO MONITOR THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The new and growing interest in measuring the quality of special education programs reflects SEAs' and LEAs' desires to prove that their programs are effective. Budget constraints at all levels of government, in combination with mounting national criticism of public education, have caused SEA and LEA administrators to seek documentation of program quality.

Progress in measuring quality has been slowed, however, by conceptual and operational difficulties. For instance, little concensus exists as to what constitutes quality, how to assess it, and how to measure program outcomes. Further difficulties result from the ambiguous relationship existing between quality and compliance monitoring. Should these two types of efforts be integrated into one system, or can they exist independently of one another? These difficulties are compounded even further by the scarcity of appropriate materials designed to measure educational quality; thus, most states undertaking this task must develop their own materials.

Despite these difficulties, a number of SEAs have committed themselves to monitoring the quality of special education programs. The experience of four such SEAs, along with the experience of a state Mental Health Division, reveal some of the potential advantages as well as the problems in evaluating program quality:

- The Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE's) System for Program Effectiveness Evaluation: Nebraska's system for evaluating program effectiveness grew from NDE officials' belief that it was time to move beyond compliance monitoring to assess the quality of special education programs statewide. A committee of educators convened by NDE developed a set of "service goals" which were based on committee members' perceptions of the characteristics of an effective special education program. These goals are the basis for an evaluation system which will be field-tested by NDE in the fall of 1983 in 25 LEAs.

- The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's System for Program Evaluation: With the help of LEAs, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is developing a model to evaluate local special education programs and services in order to provide state policymakers and local administrators with information on the impacts of LEA programs. This evaluation system basically consists of a series of questions that probe the nature of an LEA's identification practices, IEP development, placement procedures, and other program characteristics. The system is self-administered by LEAs and will be field-tested during the 1983-84 school year.

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Use of Program Quality Evaluation: The Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) of this state's Department of Public Instruction developed a system of Program Quality Evaluation (POE) to assist local districts in assessing the effectiveness of their special education programs. POE is a goal-based evaluation methodology which establishes program goals and objectives, as well as detailed evaluation questions that will be used to

determine if objectives have been met. This system has been designed to be of use to LEAs and the SEA, i.e., contributing information about local program quality and state planning and program development. DEC eventually hopes to integrate PQE with its compliance monitoring system because of the belief that one consolidated monitoring system is both cost efficient and effective.

- The California Department of Education's Integration of Quality Assessment and Compliance Monitoring: California's Department of Education is one of the few SEAs to have administered a monitoring system that was designed to combine compliance monitoring and measurement of program quality. This unitary system was built around a series of criteria statements against which school performance was measured. While implementation of the system was reported to be satisfactory, it is under revision as part of a general restructuring of the SEA's monitoring procedures.

- The Oregon Mental Health Division's Student Progress Record System: Oregon's Mental Health Division (MHD) is evaluating the quality of programming for Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) children in public schools. (Under Oregon law, MHD is responsible for public school programming for these children.) After obtaining extensive input from its consumers -- teachers -- this division developed a system to measure student achievement, the Student Progress Record (SPR), that focusses on individual children's progress. The SPR has been incorporated into IEP programs, is used to ensure program accountability, and has bolstered political and financial support.

As these examples illustrate, approaches to program quality evaluation can differ markedly. However, the movement toward measuring program quality seems to be gaining force. More and more SEAs are expressing interest in it, particularly as a way of documenting the value of their program for state and local public officials. Most of these approaches demonstrate that SEAs' monitoring of state-operated programs is most effective when it is just one aspect of a more

encompassing partnership between SEAs and other state agencies. This report documents three of these approaches:

- The Minnesota Department of Education's Use of Interagency Agreements: The Minnesota Department of Education entered into written agreements with the Departments of Public Welfare and Corrections to ensure that their educational programs complied with federal and state law. Both agencies also agreed to correct deficiencies cited by the monitoring team. Since the agreements were signed, the Department of Public Welfare facilities have been brought into compliance by improving their due process, privacy protection, and surrogate parent procedures. Greater difficulties were encountered in monitoring the correctional facilities, but substantial program improvement has been made.

- The Arizona Department of Education's Monitoring of Youth Correctional Facilities: As a result of several years of monitoring the educational programs for handicapped children in this state's correctional facilities, improvements have been made in the kind of education incarcerated youth have received. This improvement resulted from a strong working relationship between Department of Education and Corrections' staff. The SEA provided intensive technical assistance, in-service training, and targeted additional funds to DOC programs. A corrective action plan is in place and continued progress is being made.

- The Virginia Department of Education's Use of Core Monitoring Standards: Working with four state agencies, the Virginia Department of Education developed a system of "core standards" for Interdepartmental Licensure and Certification. These core standards are administered by an interagency team that visits each state-operated residential facility. Due to the unusual degree of cooperation among different state agencies, each state agency is able to assist in reviewing children's total programs, and, in that way, ensure the review's substantive value and efficiency. Virginia's approach stresses meeting the basic requirements of federal and state education statutes in conjunction with the requirements of other federal and state human service statutes.

EFFECTIVE STATE MONITORING POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

One of the most challenging aspects of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) has been the requirement that state education agencies (SEAs) monitor all educational programs for handicapped children within their state to ensure compliance with federal law. In most states, this mandate expanded the SEA monitoring role in at least two important ways. First, it required more extensive monitoring of local programs. Under P.L. 94-142, SEAs have had to gather much more detailed information about school districts' policies and procedures than they did in the past. Second, the statute broadened the scope of SEA monitoring: it required SEAs to review the educational programs of other state agencies, thus placing SEA officials in the sometimes difficult position of evaluating the nature and quality of state operated programs which in the past had been completely autonomous.

SEAs have made substantial progress in carrying out parts of their new monitoring responsibilities. For example, SEA officials indicate that monitoring of LEAs has proceeded well. Most states have completed a three-year cycle of LEA monitoring, and while much work must be done before all LEAs are in compliance with federal law, administrators are optimistic that this goal can be achieved with the aid of existing monitoring techniques.

Other aspects of SEA monitoring are more problemmatic. Administrators cite two issues in particular which, they believe, will require careful policy development in the years ahead. These are:

(1) The need to monitor or evaluate the "quality" of special education programs; and

(2) The need to monitor more effectively the education programs administered by other state agencies.

Because state officials contacted in the course of this project voiced great concern about these two issues, they are the focus for this report on effective state monitoring policies.

The report is organized into three sections. Section I reviews P.L. 94-142's monitoring mandate in more detail and summarizes state experiences in implementing monitoring systems. Sections II and III then analyze specific SEA policies that are related to the two issues identified above. Because many SEA policies in these two areas are experimental in nature, Sections II and III contain a mix of developmental efforts and proven successes. It may well be that the "emerging" SEA policies will be most useful in illustrating the new directions that are open to SEAs.

I. THE MANDATE FOR STATE MONITORING UNDER P.L. 94-142

The intent of the monitoring provisions in P.L. 94-142 is to assure a single line of accountability for the education of all handicapped children within a state. To this end, the federal statute provides a broad mandate for state education agencies, requiring that they:

> "...provide for procedures for evaluation at least annually of the effectiveness of programs in meeting the educational needs of handicapped children (including evaluation of individualized educational programs), in accordance with such criteria that the Commissioner shall prescribe..."
> (Section 613.(a)(11))

This mandate is made more specific in the federal regulations issued after the law's passage:

> "A general application must include assurances, satisfactory to the Commissioner...
>
> (3) That the state will adopt and use proper methods of administering each program, including:
>
> (i) Monitoring of agencies, institutions, and organizations responsible for carrying out each program, and the enforcement of any obligations imposed on those agencies, institutions, and organizations under law;
>
> (ii) Providing technical assistance, if necessary, to those agencies, institutions, and organizations;
>
> (iii) Encourgaging the adoption of promising or innovative educational techniques by those agencies, institutions, and organizations;
>
> (iv) The dissemination throughout the state of information on program requirements and successful practices; and
>
> (v) The correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through monitoring or evaluation."

(Education Division General Administrative Regulations, Section 100b. 101 (e) (3))

Two aspects of this mandate are particularly noteworthy. For one, the monitoring mandate under P.L. 94-142 is comprehensive in scope. The SEA must monitor all programs in the state which receive public funds to educate handicapped children. This means that, in addition to monitoring LEAs and intermediate educational units (IEUs), the SEA must (1) monitor other state human service agencies that administer education programs for handicapped children, and (2) assure that any programs for handicapped children located in private facilities and paid for by public funds comply with the requirements of federal law.

Second, the regulations give prominence to the requirement that the SEA shall "undertake monitoring and evaluation activities to insure compliance...with the requirements (of the law)." To a large extent, this requirement has led SEAs to focus their monitoring efforts on the procedural aspects of federal and state law. The standards established to assess LEA programs have been based on the specific processes outlined in P.L. 94-142 -- e.g., procedures for IEP development, parent involvement, use of surrogate parents, etc. -- rather than broader issues concerning the nature or effectiveness of special education programs. Underlying this approach is an assumption that compliance with P.L. 94-142's specific requirements will assure quality programming.

Since P.L. 94-142's passage, SEAs have implemented monitoring systems designed to generate the information required by federal law and regulation. In fact, by now,

many aspects of these state systems have become similar. For example, studies have shown that SEAs' monitoring of local programs almost always incorporates the following stages:

- Pre-visit preparations, which include organizing staff, assigning responsibilities, and scheduling visits;
- On-site procedures, usually involving a team or an individual from the SEA reviewing LEA documentation procedures and examining in detail a sampling of student records, particularly IEPs;
- Reporting, which usually takes the form of immediate verbal feedback to LEA administrators at the completion of a monitoring visit and, at a later point, a formal written report on the educational programs of the local education agency; and
- Feedback and Follow-up activities, which can include further SEA review of an LEA where deficiencies were noted, or corrective action if the LEA agrees with the deficiencies and takes steps to remedy them.[1]

Along with these similarities, state monitoring efforts differ in several ways as well. For example, the priority which SEAs assign to monitoring varies widely state by state. In some states, extensive staff resources have been devoted to this task, and the SEA has continually refined its monitoring materials and procedures. Other SEAs have been content with a minimal monitoring effort which they believe assures compliance with federal law but does not attempt to accomplish any broader purposes.

SEAs' experiences in monitoring local programs already have generated a number of lessons. First, compliance

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[1]John Tringo and Martin Kaufman, "State Practices and Progress in Monitoring P.L. 94-142," unpublished.

monitoring is one of the most legitimate, and perhaps the most powerful, vehicle that SEAs have to influence LEA programs. There is no doubt that vigorous SEA enforcement of federal and state special education statutes has changed the nature and scope of LEA programs. It has contributed to a widespread upgrading of local program standards and ensured that basic precepts of the federal law -- for example, the right to education in the least restrictive environment -- are incorporated into local programs. SEAs' compliance monitoring is one of the central reasons for the dramatic impact of P.L. 94-142 nationwide.

Second, however, SEAs have discovered that not all LEAs require the same level of monitoring. Initially, state procedures were developed to provide uniform monitoring to all LEAs regardless of the quality or scope of their program. Naturally, smaller LEAs were monitored in less time and with fewer people than larger LEAs, but the basic procedures were the same for all. As SEAs have completed their first monitoring cycles, many have begun to differentiate among LEAs so that they can focus their monitoring efforts -- and particularly their follow-up or corrective action efforts -- on LEAs where problems have been identified and special help is needed. SEAs argue that to do otherwise -- i.e., to continue to spread resources equally across all LEAs regardless of their situation -- is wasteful of increasingly scarce state personnel resources.

Third, SEAs are questioning whether the time and money spent in monitoring are yielding benefits of comparable value.

Monitoring efforts consume a significant portion of state agency resources and also impose burdens of time and expense on local education agencies. Voluminous data are collected and, depending on the state system, paperwork can be extensive. While no SEAs question the need for some type of compliance monitoring, an increasing number are asking if current monitoring procedures fully meet the needs of either the SEA or LEAs. Related to this point, some SEAs are considering whether the data collected through monitoring activities could be better targeted to meet specific information needs of the SEAs.

Fourth, an increasing number of SEAs are concluding that many LEAs now need technical assistance rather than, or in addition to, compliance monitoring. Monitoring efforts of the past have inevitably carried with them an enforcement and oversight function. In fact, the nature of monitoring puts the SEA in a supervisory role, with an implicit threat of withdrawal or withholding of funds if necessary. Rather than promoting LEA perceptions of the SEA as a partner in the effort to educate handicapped children, compliance monitoring efforts can generate an adversarial relationship between the SEA and local education agencies. To avoid this, many SEAs are attempting to give equal emphasis to technical assistance roles. In this context, the SEA views itself, and is viewed by the LEA, as a source of help in identifying LEA problems and of advice and perhaps assistance in resolving these problems. This emphasis on technical assistance need not

imply that compliance monitoring is unimportant (particularly for LEAs not yet in compliance with the federal law), but it suggests that for some LEAs sufficient progress has been made so that basic compliance issues should share priority with an ongoing attempt to improve and strengthen local education agency programs -- a task that can best be done if the LEA and SEA work together.

Fifth, many SEA officials are arguing that compliance monitoring efforts, at least as they have been conducted in the past, have missed some fundamental, qualitative aspects of educational programs for handicapped children. Compliance monitoring's focus on the procedural aspects of state and federal law has tended to overshadow the qualitative aspects of educational programming. For example, it is comparatively simple for an SEA to observe whether an LEA has in place the procedures necessary to develop an IEP and make a placement decision. The SEA can observe whether timelines are observed, whether parents are duly notified, and whether all written products are in the student's file. However, an LEA can meet all these requirements and still be placing students in inappropriate settings or failing to develop the resources in regular schools that are necessary to assure education in the least restrictive environment. A growing number of SEAs are now eager to move beyond looking simply at procedural and quantitative measures of LEA performance and to begin investigating qualitative measures of educational programming as well.

Sixth, SEA officials realize that progress in monitoring LEAs has not been accompanied by comparable success in monitoring educational programs in state-operated facilities. In part, this disparity is a matter of priorities; most SEAs have given greater attention to LEA monitoring because LEA programs serve the majority of children with handicapping conditions in a state. In part, however, the gap in progress reflects SEAs' inability to marshall the resources necessary to effectively monitor the range of programs administered by other state human service agencies for handicapped children.

In sum, the knowledge that SEAs have gained from their experience in monitoring local programs seems to be leading toward a consensus that (1) compliance monitoring remains an essential and powerful tool to ensure the adequacy of local programs; (2) it is time to consider building on, or revising, basic compliance monitoring systems to reflect more qualitative dimensions of special education programming; and (3) the techniques which have proven successful in monitoring local programs must now be adapted to enable more effective monitoring of other state programming.

Based on this consensus, two policy questions emerge as requiring attention by federal and state administrators as SEAs continue to develop their monitoring policies:

1. How and to what extent should SEA monitoring efforts attempt to assess quality of education?
2. How can SEAs effectively monitor parallel state agencies?

The remainder of this report explores policies related to these two issues -- one of which represents the emerging "state-of-the-art" of state monitoring activities, and the other of which represents SEAs' on-going attempt to carry-out the "general supervision" mandate of P.L. 94-142.

II. SEA POLICIES TO MONITOR THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The issue of quality monitoring has grown in importance as state and local education agencies feel the need to gain more from their monitoring activities: more than descriptions of program procedures; more than just assertions that special education is somehow "working;" more, even, than information about LEAs' compliance with state and federal laws. Special educators, like all education officials, are feeling the pressure of public scrutiny and, increasingly, are seeking to prove that their programs are effective and of high quality. This has led to a series of efforts, undertaken independently by a growing number of SEAs, to develop methods for measuring the quality of LEA programs.

Progress in measuring quality has been slow, however, because such measurement is inherently difficult, with pitfalls that are both conceptual and operational in nature. A number of factors make quality monitoring problemmatic.

Of these, the first is the most fundamental: the concept of quality in special education is only beginning to be defined. The question "What constitutes quality?" can be answered in many different ways, and there is, as yet, no consensus within the special education field about the dimensions that make up quality programming. Similarly, the approaches to assessing quality are as varied as the goals which different people place on special education programs. Should quality be judged by looking primarily at program design or structure? Or are program outcomes the only valid measure?

Are cost factors relevant to assessing quality, or should evaluative judgements be made free of resource considerations? Is it necessary to closely examine student achievements, or can parental satisfaction be a sufficient proxy for assessing quality? Ultimately, the question is, whose goals for special education are to be used when quality is assessed: those of policymakers, administrators, teachers, students, parents, or some combination from all these persons?

SEA attempts to measure program quality are complicated by the need to define their relationship to compliance monitoring. Should these two types of efforts be integrated into one system, or can they exist independently of one another? While the role of the SEA in compliance monitoring is clear, what should be the SEA role in quality assessment? Perhaps most importantly, do SEAs have the resources to do a thorough job of both compliance monitoring and quality assessment? Or does the movement toward measuring quality necessarily involve less intensive compliance monitoring? These and similar questions are crucial as SEA officials think about measuring program quality.

The policy problems involved in assessing program quality are compounded by the scarcity of materials that are designed for this purpose. Most of the materials available to assess special education quality fall within one of two extremes. They are either very general -- i.e., they set forth an overall approach to quality measurement -- in which case considerable work must still be done to tailor them to the

specific needs of an SEA. Or they tend to be highly specific, designed to measure a discrete program and adopted to that program's goals. In the latter case, the materials are likely to be too one-dimensional to be immediately useful to an SEA. Thus, as most SEAs have found, the decision to measure program quality usually includes a commitment to develop appropriate materials as well.

Finally, any attempt to measure quality may encounter resistance from those whose work is being measured. By its nature, evaluation carries with it the risk that results will be unfavorable rather than favorable to program administrators, teachers, and others involved in education. While everyone endorses the concept of quality measurement, the reality of it can be intimidating for those whose "quality" is being assessed.

For all of these reasons, SEA attempts to measure quality involve more than a simple expansion of existing activities. They require a process by which educators reexamine their goals and then seek to determine how well they are doing against these goals. Quality measurement also requires the participation of a wide range of people, in order to gain support from all those whose work will be assessed. Thus, when an SEA begins the process of quality measurement, the ultimate benefits may not materialize for several years and are almost certain to require the coordinated efforts of many people over an extended period of time.

Despite the formidable challenges, a number of SEAs have committed themselves to monitoring or evaluating the quality of special education programs. These efforts go by many different names, and the nomenclature alone in this field has become a source of confusion. For purposes of clarification, the generic term "program quality evaluation" is used frequently in the discussion which follows, but it is meant to include the range of quality-related efforts which SEAs have undertaken.

Four SEA efforts we examined are sufficiently developed that their experiences, and the approaches they have chosen, are instructive about the problems and potential for program quality evaluation. In addition, an evaluation system used by a state developmental disabilities agency to assess the progress of trainable mentally retarded (TMR) students in local school programs provides another perspective on the measurement of quality. The five efforts are examined in turn below. They are:

- Nebraska's development of a system for Program Effectiveness Evaluation;
- Missouri's system for evaluating the effectiveness of special education programs;
- North Carolina's use of Program Quality Evaluation to assess quality of local programs;
- California's incorporation of quality measurement into its compliance monitoring system; and
- Oregon's use of a Student Progress Record to document the effectiveness of school programs for TMR students.

A. The Nebraska Department of Education's System of Program Effectiveness Evaluation

The Nebraska Department of Education is developing a system of program evaluation which is designed to meet the SEA's needs for evaluative information, as well as the comparable needs of LEAs.

The Special Education Branch of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has worked for several years to develop a method of determining the effectiveness of special education programs. SEA administrators, as well as LEA officials, have sought such a method because they felt it was time to move beyond compliance monitoring and assess the quality of special education programs statewide. In addition, NDE's effort responds to a 1973 state law that requires NDE to study the effectiveness of local special education programs.

Development of evaluation methods was begun in 1980 when NDE entered into a service agreement with the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) to obtain technical assistance on program effectiveness. In the following year, NDE convened a Program Effectiveness Development Committee, whose twenty members included LEA staff, higher education personnel, and special educators and general educators drawn from all geographic areas of the state. The Committee developed a set of standards -- or "service goals" -- which were based on the Committee members' perceptions of the characteristics of an effective special education program. These standards covered program areas such as Administration; Service Delivery; Curriculum/ Materials/Facilities; Communication with Consumers; Fiscal Management; and Systems Aspects (i.e., relationships between LEAs and other human service agencies). To obtain wide input on these standards, NDE then convened a symposium on Program Effectiveness Evaluation involving approximately 70 educators from around the state who (1) reviewed and revised the standards; (2) identified the types of information that an LEA would need in order to evaluate each of the service goals; and (3) identified potential pitfalls within each service goal.

Based on this revised set of service goals, approximately 25 LEAs will field test the evaluation system in the fall of 1983. In some districts, NDE's application of the evaluation system will be combined

with the regular monitoring visits of NDE staff; in other districts, NDE staff will just conduct Program Effectiveness Evaluation. Prior to the field tests, NDE staff will receive further training to ensure that they have the skills to assist LEAs with proper evaluations.

NDE officials are now working toward making the evaluation data useful for the state agency as well as LEAs, while still retaining flexibility in the evaluation methodology. (For a more detailed description of Nebraska's evaluation system, see Appendix A.)

Nebraska's efforts illustrate several of the factors that are moving SEAs toward program quality evaluation. The Department of Education began this work because officials there believed that the qualitative dimensions of special education were not adequately assessed or documented by existing monitoring procedures. They, like officials in other states, saw the need for a new type of evaluation effort that would help set standards for high quality programs, rather than simply assess LEAs for compliance with federal law.

Nebraska's efforts are also similar to those of other states in that NDE's work was partially motivated by legislative demand for more information. While Nebraska may be atypical in having this legislative interest expressed in law (the 1973 statute), SEA officials' desire to respond more fully to legislative inquiries is not unusual.

Nebraska's methodology for Program Effectiveness Evaluation is also worth noting, because it illustrates a type of evaluative effort which is being followed or considered by other SEAs. The "service goals" developed in the Nebraska system are an attempt to describe the characteristics of a

high quality -- and thus effective -- program. For the most part, these "service goals" describe program attributes, i.e., the types of policies, procedures, and activities that can be expected to produce program quality. They do not focus on program or student outcomes, but assure that if the desired attributes of a program -- the inputs, in evaluation terms -- are in place, then desired outcomes will be promoted. In this type of system, the concept of program quality is closely related to the concept of effectiveness, but is not identical to it. As will be noted in subsequent examples, other states have focussed more directly on program outcomes as a means of measuring program quality.

Before discussing other aspects of Nebraska's Program Effectiveness Evaluation system, it is useful to look at a second SEA whose work both resembles and differs from the Nebraska effort.

B. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's System for Program Evaluation

Missouri's approach to assessing the quality of special education programs is based on an evaluation system which would be self-administered by LEAs.

> The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is developing a model to evaluate local special education programs and services. A primary goal of the model is to provide local administrators with information on the impacts of their programs, but the information is intended to be useful to state policymakers as well. The DESE approach to evaluation is oriented to LEA needs partly because much of the impetus for developing an evaluation system came from LEAs themselves.

Missouri's evaluation system basically consists of a series of questions that probe the nature of an LEA's identification practices, evaluation or diagnosis practices, IEP development, placement procedures, and other dimensions of the local special education program. The evaluation adopts a systems approach that enables an LEA to examine each stage of the major activities necessary for effective programming. The model is self-administered by LEAs, and they in turn are responsible for identifying program areas that require improvement.

The specific questions used in this system emerged from a series of meetings between SEA and LEA staff from February to June, 1983. State officials thus believe that the questions represent a professional consensus on the factors necessary for effective programming. Missouri hopes to field test the system during the 1983-84 school year. DESE views this field test as a cooperative "pilot" effort, after which SEA and LEA staff will refine the model and judge its utility for LEAs.

Both DESE and LEA officials believe two benefits will result from the evaluation activity. Local districts will be able to use information about program effectiveness to gain continued support of their programs from local school boards. When local boards are faced with tough budget decisions, special education administrators realize that data on program accomplishments are essential. In addition, DESE staff stress that the evaluation is expected to lead to program improvements. As stated in the DESE "Evaluation Review" document, "information on ...programs and services... should result in action to improve them." (For a more detailed description of Missouri's evaluation model, see Appendix B.)

As Missouri's evaluation effort illustrates, the demand for efforts to assess educational quality may emerge from education practitioners at all levels of government. Program quality evaluation is not being imposed on LEAs by state administrators. Rather, LEA officials -- in Missouri, as in other states -- are often eager for it, recognizing that it meets their own information needs.

The fact that quality assessment is often a mutual goal of state and local officials is well-illustrated by the collaborative manner in which the Missouri system has been developed. There, as in Nebraska, LEAs contributed to formulating the questions and will be an ongoing part of judging whether the system works.

Missouri's activities also illustrate one of the major reason why quality measurement is becoming more desired. As was mentioned previously, special educators recognize the need to defend their programs, especially when education funds -- local tax revenues, as well as state and federal subsidies -- face competition in a world of dwindling dollars. Special education's growth in the past decade resulted not just from the P.L. 94-142 mandate, but from a widespread conviction that its program provided clear and direct benefits to handicapped children. Now that new programs have been created and special education's rapid program growth has slowed somewhat, administrators must be able to justify continued investments. Most administrators are confident they can make a strong case if data on program quality and effects can be more systematically produced.

As noted, Missouri's efforts on program evaluation are similar in some ways to Nebraska's. In part, this is due to common elements in the development of the two states' activities: both SEAs involved the MRRC in their early planning; they both reviewed some of the same materials in developing their systems; and administrators from Missouri

attended Nebraska's early meetings about quality assessment. But in addition, the similarities between the two states represent patterns that will probably occur in most SEAs as they begin to move toward program quality evaluation.

For example, in both states, the SEA decided to take a leadership role even though much of the desire for evaluation systems was expressed by local administrators. In both Missouri and Nebraska, SEA officials realized that the task of developing evaluation standards was probably beyond the capacities of any one LEA. Without SEA coordination, program quality evaluation was unlikely to materialize. This is liable to be true in most states.

Similarly, development of materials on quality evaluation has been an inductive process in Nebraska and Missouri, and would probably be so in any state. Neither Nebraska nor Missouri simply adopted a preexisting set of materials as the basis for their evaluation; appropriate pre-packaged materials do not exist. Because the state-of-the-art in program effectiveness evaluation is still rudimentary, SEAs moving in this direction will have to devote much of their effort to developing materials.

Even if evaluation materials were more generally available, Nebraska's and Missouri's experiences indicate that tailoring the methodology to a state's specific needs is essential. This process forces SEAs to be explicit about the purposes of evaluation, the audience for evaluation results, and the precise information that will be generated by the

evaluation. In addition, the process of developing evaluation methodologies also serves to marshall support. SEAs' and LEAs' collaborative work in developing either the evaluation questions (as in Missouri) or service goals (as in Nebraska) reduces the threat inherent in evaluation for all participants. It ensures that an evaluation will not be seen as something imposed on LEAs by a higher level of government, but rather as a useful tool which the LEAs themselves have designed.

C. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Use of Program Quality Evaluation

Several of these same elements can be observed in yet a third approach to quality evaluation. While similar to the activities just described, North Carolina's approach differs in several important ways as well.

> The Division for Exceptional Children (DEC) of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has developed a system of Program Quality Evaluation (POE) to assist local districts in assessing the effectiveness of special education programs.
>
> As in other states, DEC officials began this effort because they felt that compliance monitoring focused primarily on the "process" of special education. What was needed, they believed, was to supplement such monitoring with "program" monitoring that would determine the quality of programs for handicapped children. The system has been developed to answer basic questions such as: Is a special program effective? Are special needs children learning academics and skills? Which parts of the special education program are excellent and which are satisfactory?
>
> DEC contracted with APT, Inc., from West Hartford, Connecticut, to develop evaluation materials and to train DEC staff in evaluation methodology. After obtaining extensive input from DEC's Regional

Coordinators, as well as from other DEC and LEA staff, APT field tested the Program Quality Evaluation (POE) model in two school systems. Revisions were then made for the final system manual.

POE is a goal-based evaluation methodology which establishes, first, a series of broad goals concerning the program to be evaluated; second, specific program objectives related to these goals; and third, detailed evaluation questions which determine if the objectives have been met. The objectives and questions focus on program operations and numerical criteria are established as benchmarks of satisfactory performance. (For example, a sample goal might be that "75% of students in a program attain desired reading skills.")

DEC is now moving toward broader implementation, and will be awarding up to sixteen competitive incentive grants of from $2,000 to $10,000 to encourage local units to participate in POE in the 1983-84 school year. The local agencies using POE will be exempt from a program compliance visit or a self-monitoring report -- the other forms of monitoring and evaluation which DEC uses to assess LEAs. (For a more detailed description of North Carolina's system, see Appendix C.)

Several aspects of North Carolina's POE system are particularly interesting. First, it was designed to be of direct assistance to the SEA as well as to LEAs. As in the case of Nebraska's and Missouri's systems, POE is intended to contribute to public information on special education (and thus build community and political support) and to improve local program quality. On this latter goal, DEC makes clear that local school districts using POE are expected to remedy any deficiencies which are found through POE procedures. In addition to assisting LEAs, however, POE is designed to improve state planning and program development. DEC hopes to aggregate evaluation data from many LEAs to obtain an improved picture of the quality of special education statewide.

Specifically, DEC believes that POE will eventually allow the state to:

- develop a state-wide perspective on special education and budgetary needs;
- produce long-range plans; and,
- make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the General Assembly.

A second interesting facet of North Carolina's system is that DEC intends to integrate POE with its compliance monitoring system. DEC makes clear in its written materials on the system that POE does not substitute for federal and state compliance monitoring; the two systems are thought of as two parts of one comprehensive monitoring system, thus avoiding the duplication of effort which can occur when such systems are developed in a parallel, but uncoordinated, fashion.

Finally, North Carolina's approach to broader implementation -- i.e., using a competitive incentive grant process -- recognizes that LEAs may incur extra costs in implementing any new system. Implicit in DEC's willingness to pay for some of these initial costs is a recognition that LEAs are more likely to implement this system if they receive help financing it.

North Carolina's interest in integrating program quality evaluation with compliance monitoring has been shared by other SEAs that have considered more extensive measurement of quality. One rationale for such consolidation is that the

resulting monitoring system is more efficient. Moreover, it can be argued that the distinctions which are sometimes drawn between program quality evaluation and compliance monitoring are spurious. These are actually just differing approaches to the same goal, i.e., improved educational programs for handicapped students. The next example illustrates advantages and disadvantages of such integration.

D. The California Department of Education's Integration of Quality Assessment and Compliance Monitoring

The California Department of Education is one of the few SEAs to have actually implemented a monitoring system combining compliance and quality monitoring. Although California's system is now under revision, it provides an example of how quality assessment can be made an integral part of a monitoring system.

> In the school years 1981-82 and 1982-83, the California Department of Education used monitoring procedures which included both compliance and quality measures. As in many other states, the Department's emphasis on quality reflected wide-spread sentiment among LEAs that compliance monitoring, as it was then done, provided little assistance to LEAs trying to improve their programs.
>
> Department officials chose to modify their overall monitoring system to include quality measures rather than develop a parallel system that would assess program effectiveness. Their goal was to emphasize examination of the total program for handicapped students, and they felt that both compliance and quality measures contributed to this aim.
>
> The methodology for the California system was derived from two sources: (1) the School Improvement Monitoring System, a child-centered evaluation system for all educational programs, which was already in use in selected districts in the state; and (2) the compliance monitoring system that the Special

Education Division had been using. The new system was built around a series of criteria statements (in effect, goal statements for effective practice). To measure school performance against these criteria, a series of more detailed questions were set forth, some of which were designed to be asked of administrators, some of parents, some of teachers, and some to be answered through document review. A proportion of these questions addressed compliance issues and were tied to specific provisions of state or federal law. Others assessed school performance or children's progress on dimensions not required by law, but judged as important. These quality questions had, for the most part, been developed by SEA staff with assistance from field personnel (teachers and administrators) who were consulted in the process.

The system was tested in school year 1981-82 and revised for 1982-83. Field evaluations of the second year were extremely positive and SEA staff believed the system gave a comprehensive view of the performance of local special education programs.

All of the monitoring systems of the California Department of Education are now under revision, due to a new effort to forge one integrated school monitoring system across all educational programs. As part of this effort, monitoring systems are being reduced primarily to their compliance components. Thus, many of the quality dimensions incorporated in the special education monitoring system of the past two years may be discarded despite their effectiveness. (For examples of California's procedures, see Appendix D.)

California's System to assess program quality has several advantages which, even though no longer used in California, may be useful to other SEAs.

California's integration of compliance monitoring and quality evaluation seemed effective both conceptually and practically. Conceptually, this integration reflected the conviction that the two types of monitoring should be linked because, ultimately, both seek to determine the degree to which programs are serving students well. This integration

also had offered practical advantages. School districts had to cope with only one system that united compliance monitoring and quality evaluation criteria, not two. As a result, SEA visits to school districts were consolidated, and training for monitoring personnel could combine both quality and compliance procedures.

California's specific methodology for consolidating compliance and quality "criteria" also offers some lessons to other SEAs. Too often, systems that evaluate educational programs can devolve into a long series of unrelated questions, with the focus being lost. By weaving compliance and quality-assessment concerns into a set of unified criteria, California's system seemed to maintain a clear focus on the evaluation's overall purpose. This clarity can be critical in determining whether a system is accepted by administrators, teachers, and parents.

California's experience with this system points to two additional aspects which SEAs contemplating program quality evaluation should study. California's system required significant state investment because it was comprehensive, validated its findings by cross-interviews and record reviews from a wide range of sources, and because field personnel conducted the monitoring review. California officials indicate that costs would be cut if state staff were used for these purposes. Also, because all LEAs used all parts of the system, it was time-consuming for SEA and LEA staff. Finally, in California this type of system was mandatory for all LEAs;

states seeking to reduce the SEA's prescriptive authority over LEAs might choose to make parts of such a system voluntary.

E. The Oregon Mental Health Division's Student Progress Record System

Oregon has taken a quite different approach to evaluating the quality of special education programming. Because of an unusual historical development of special education programming in Oregon,[2] the Mental Health Division (MHD) in the State's Department of Human Resources oversees local school districts' programming for TMR children. Therefore, the MHD agency, and not the Department of Education, is evaluating the quality of TMR programming. The Oregon system emphasizes detailed measurement of each handicapped child's educational progress. By aggregating this information, the state agency is able to judge broader program effectiveness.

> The Oregon Mental Health Division has implemented a system of student progress evaluation that measures the quality of education received by Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) children in Oregon public schools. (In Oregon, the TMR designation includes moderately, severely, and profoundly retarded children.
>
> Use of this system began shortly after 1969, when the state legislature first assigned responsibility for educating TMR children to the Division of Mental Health. Prior to that time, most of these children had been living at home or in an institution and there was considerable skepticism -- among educators as well as parents -- that they could be adequately educated in public schools. Thus, as MHD officials

[2]Under current Oregon law, the Division of Mental Health is responsible for educational programming for TMR children, through contracts with local school districts. Of approximately 1,400 TMR children in the state, all but 50 are being educated in public schools as part of the programs set up by the MR/DD Program Office, Mental Health Division.

supervised the movement of these children from other settings to public schools, they felt it was critical to (1) show that these children could make progress in public schools, and (2) establish accountability over local school programs for the effectiveness of the instructional programs.

MHD found its first system for measuring student achievement, based on three standardized tests, unsatisfactory. Subsequently, MHD called together special education teachers to review fundamental questions, such as "what were children being taught?" and "what should children be expected to know after each teaching year?" The instrument which was eventually developed was tested for several years, beginning in 1971. It was substantially revised in 1975 and again in 1978 in response to the strengths and weaknesses identified by its primary users, the teachers. For example, in the 1978 revision, teachers criticized the instrument's length and its inability to measure small increments of progress. As a result of this critique, the system was modified; additional questions were developed, and the instrument was divided into skill-related sub-units. Teachers were instructed to use only the appropriate sub-units, thereby gaining more detailed information on a child, while reducing the testing time involved.

Over time, the Student Progress Record (SPR) has been used in many ways. In its early years, its results were used to show the legislature and the public that TMR children were making progress in the public schools and thus to justify continued program support. More recently, SPR has been an integral part of the IEP process, establishing very clear expectations for the development of each child.

MHD also used the SPR to ensure program accountability. In addition to reviewing each school district's contract and fiscal report, MHD examines data from the SPR in order to judge how effective each local program has been.

Although its historical development has differed from the SEA-based efforts previously examined, Oregon's work underscores some recurrent issues that characterize all efforts at quality evaluation. For example, the use of SPR

data to bolster political and financial support for a program was a primary purpose in its early years. MHD success in using information for this purpose indicates that LEAs' desire to use data in this way is well founded; efforts expended in developing such a system can pay off. MHD also found that their system became useful and was accepted only after teachers using it were asked to comment on it. SPR's successive revisions illustrate both the need for and the value of constantly adapting any evaluation methodology to the changing skills and perceptions of the people using it, as well as to changing program goals.

The differences between Oregon's system and other systems are also worth noting for the useful directions they can suggest to SEAs. Oregon's focus on individual children's progress makes its system particularly strong. In contrast to many of the quality assessment efforts SEAs have developed, the MHD system pays little attention to program inputs or characteristics. Instead, it tries to answer, in the most direct way possible, the central evaluation question -- "What is this program accomplishing" -- and does so by measuring change in knowledge and behavior. Because many SEAs start by looking at compliance monitoring issues, many of their efforts to measure quality still rely heavily on observing program characteristics. Oregon's approach seems to be a more reliable measure of a program's success in meeting educational goals. Because of this reliability, Oregon's approach also seems to provide a better rationale by which to argue for increased political or fiscal support.

In addition, Oregon's approach also seems to have been well-designed to achieve the broader aims of program management and accountability. MHD has been able to integrate SPR with other agency activities, thereby deriving multiple benefits from the initial investment in the system. The use of the SPR in developing IEPs is one such example; the information SPR generates about student achievement gives a new dimension to IEPs, allowing teachers and parents to be more specific when discussing student goals and accomplishments. MHD also has used the SPR data to select teachers who participated in special in-service training programs and to judge the effectiveness of the training program provided by Teaching Research, a Division of Oregon's Department of Higher Education. In short, these data allow a number of different measures of MHD and local school districts' effectiveness in carrying out their mandate to educate TMR children.

F. Summary

A number of summary comments can be made about SEAs' efforts to develop and implement program quality evaluation. Perhaps most strikingly, the methods used by SEAs to measure quality are varied and represent divergent views about the goals of quality monitoring. Figure I, which summarizes the major characteristics of the five examples described in this section, confirms that state agencies measure different things when they assess program "quality". For example, Nebraska and Missouri focus on program characteristics, or inputs. Their systems establish program standards (or goals) which are

FIGURE I
Characteristics of State Program Quality Evaluation Efforts

	SEA Role	LEA Role	Basis for Evaluation	Products
Missouri	• Coordinated development of materials. • Convened LEA representatives to review materials.	• Jointly developed evaluation materials with SEA. • Will self-administer evaluation methodology.	• A systems analysis of educational programs, with questions that address program resources and policies.	• Information for local school districts.
Nebraska	• Coordinated development of materials and evaluation standards. • Convened advisory committee. • Will administer evaluation.	• Reviewed and revised a draft of the proposed standards.	• Standards and service goals which define the characteristics of a quality program.	• Information for local school districts.
North Carolina	• Developed materials. • Will administer evaluation. • Will aggregate data statewide.	• Reviewed materials. • Have option to compete for incentive grants.	• Program goals, specific objectives, and evaluation questions which focus on program operations. • Numerical standards for program accomplishments.	• Information for LEAs. • Information for SEA planning and budgeting system.
California	• Developed and revised materials. • Administered monitoring system.	• Provided feedback to SEA on effectiveness of the system.	• General goals and specific criteria defined as being the characteristics of a quality program.	• Written reports for LEA and SEA (compliance monitoring report).
Oregon	• None. The system is supervised by the MHD state agency.	• Administer materials to assess both program and student performance.	• Increments of behavior and/or skill/learning change.	• Report on each student's progress, classroom progress and district progress, for LEA and SEA.

FIGURE I
Characteristics of State Program Quality Evaluation Efforts
(Continuation)

	Other Characteristics	Current State of Development	Relationship to Compliance Monitoring
Missouri	• Discretion given to LEAs on which program areas to assess;	• To be field-tested in 30 school districts in school year 1983-84.	• None.
Nebraska	• Use of evaluation is voluntary for LEAs at this point in time.	• To be field-tested in four districts in school year 1983-84.	• SEA wants to coordinate but not combine quality evaluation with compliance monitoring.
North Carolina	• SEA will award incentive grants to participating LEAs.	• Field-tested in 1982-83. • Implementation in 16 districts scheduled for FY 1983-84.	• LEAs pilot-testing the system are exempt from compliance monitoring procedures • Eventual integration of quality evaluation and compliance monitoring.
California	• Quality measures are interwoven with compliance measures in one system.	• Used statewide in 1981-82 and 1983-84. • Full compliance monitoring system now under revision.	• Fully integrated with compliance monitoring system.
Oregon	• Materials proved useful program advocacy with the state legislature. Developed by teachers.	• Used in Oregon since 1969.	• No relationship to SEA compliance monitoring.

believed to be associated with quality, and then assess how closely LEAs conform to these standards. By contrast, the Oregon system looks almost entirely at student outcomes. In Oregon's view, program quality should be judged primarily by change in students' skills and behavior. This focus on program effectiveness means that less attention is devoted in Oregon's system to describing local program policies and procedures. Between these two are other systems which attempt to synthesize the two approaches: these include (1) North Carolina's system which blends measures of student achievement and program characteristics to measure program quality, and (2) California's system which also measures student performance as well as overall program inputs.

Because none of these systems, other than Oregon's, has been tested for any period of time, it is too early to determine if documentation of program inputs is sufficient to measure program quality. In the absence of such evidence, however, the use of student and program outcome measures seems to have the greatest potential for substantiating program quality. Ultimately, education programs must seek (and be evaluated by) effectiveness in providing new skills or information to a student, and it may be wise for SEAs to reflect these goals in their attempts to design quality evaluation procedures.

The SEA role in program quality evaluation also varies widely, indicating that SEAs will have to choose the degree of responsibility they wish to assert in this area.

All of the SEAs discussed here have exerted leadership in developing quality evaluation materials and in promoting implementation of these systems. In some states, like Missouri, the SEA role basically stopped there. Much of the implementation in Missouri will be left to the discretion of LEAs. In other states, for example, California, the SEA role has been much more extensive. The SEA there was involved in all aspects of quality evaluation because it was an integral part of the state's compliance monitoring system. A position midway between these extremes is again demonstrated by North Carolina, where the SEA clearly will supervise the development and use of the PQE system, but is allowing LEAs to take the lead in changing its content to reflect local conditions and then actually implementing it.

The consequences of these differing SEA roles are likely to be significant. Just developing a program quality evaluation system is costly; fully implementing it requires even more resources. SEA officials must consider whether they can afford this activity without taking resources away from other essential functions. For SEAs that want to move ahead with program quality evaluation, but do not want it to become a statewide activity for which they are then responsible, the SEA examples which coordinate system development but do not fully implement it may be the most helpful models.

While the differences among SEA evaluation efforts are significant, their similarities are even more marked. For example, in most of the states discussed here, and in many

other states as well, the movement toward program quality evaluation seems to be gaining force. In part, this reflects pressures from outside the special education field. The national attention being given to the quality of public schooling, by blue-ribbon commissions and other research studies, cannot fail to have a "ripple effect" for special education. However, most of the pressure to examine program quality comes from within the special education field, from state and local administrators. The SEAs described in this chapter have been developing quality evaluation for several years; other SEA officials interviewed for this report are on the verge of designing their own version of quality monitoring; and, most importantly, local education officials around the country are arguing strongly for ways to document the effectiveness of their programs. This continuing LEA advocacy of quality evaluation may be the wellspring that gives this issue high priority for the next several years. As long as local special education administrators must defend budgets or compete for new funds, they are likely to want methods of proving program success.

A further similarity among SEAs is that a decision to undertake quality measurement means an SEA must be willing to reexamine its own basic goals and those of local special education programs. Most SEAs find that quality measurement sparks a new analysis of fundamental questions such as "What is the goal of special education programs?," "What are our expectations for special education students?," and "What are

our priorities for program staff and funds?" The SEAs examined in this report (as well as the Oregon Mental Health Division) answered these questions in different ways, as noted, but the process of developing answers seemed productive in all instances. An SEA must be willing to invest the time to sort out these issues, involving a wide range of people in the process, before any attempt to monitor program quality can succeed.

Closely related to the preceeding issue is the fact that the development of a quality assessment system is a process that involves time and usually a wide range of people. The SEA experiences described in this section indicate that almost all SEAs go through a process of (1) clarification of goals for evaluation, (2) review of alternative evaluation systems, (3) development of new materials, (4) building of consensus for the new system, (5) training for implementation, (6) field testing, and (7) eventual broader implementation. Of these activities, those designed to gain user input are particularly important because they insure that the system design responds to users' needs and that new procedures are not threatening.

User participation in developing the system is critical because an effective quality monitoring or evaluation system will change the expectations and incentives which people bring to their work. Unless a special education program is fully effective, a quality monitoring system will alert educators to different priorities and criteria against

which their work will be assessed. Particularly when evaluation standards include numerical measures, as is the case in North Carolina's POE system, teachers and administrators adjust their own expectations to those the system incorporates. These new expectations are unlikely to be viewed positively unless users have had a role in developing their standards.

For SEAs, monitoring educational quality raises questions about the degree of control over local programs the state agency wishes or is able to exercise. One of the main differences between the quality evaluation systems here described is the extent to which they are mandatory for LEAs. For instance, Missouri's plan is completely voluntary; Nebraska intends to make the evaluation mandatory statewide, but will allow LEAs flexibility in choosing evaluation criteria; California's system makes quality monitoring a necessary part of compliance monitoring. The SEA decision on this issue is liable to be influenced by factors outside of monitoring issues per se: for example, Nebraska has a state law requiring a program effectiveness review, while Missouri has a strong tradition of local district autonomy. Even so, each SEA must decide whether the quality measurement is to be voluntary, used only by LEAs that find it helpful, or mandatory because it is an issue of concern statewide.

Finally, despite the strong shift toward quality evaluation, compliance monitoring remains essential. None of the SEAs analyzed here believe that quality evaluation should

replace compliance monitoring. They do, however, share a belief that current compliance monitoring procedures miss too many dimensions of special education programming. The challenge for SEAs in the coming years will be to pursue both goals within feasible constraints of staff resources and budgets, for both types of program assessment will be important, although for different reasons. Compliance monitoring continues to be an essential tool, rooted in the federal statute, to ensure that federal and state laws are carried out and to cement the progress that has been made in achieving equal educational opportunities for handicapped children. Quality evaluation for special education, when added to compliance monitoring, can address equally fundamental concerns about whether programs are having their intended effects.

III. SEA MONITORING OF PARALLEL STATE AGENCIES

Under the general supervision clause of P.L. 94-142, SEAs are responsible for ensuring that educational programs administered by other human service agencies comply with the federal law. For most SEAs, this responsibility represented a sweeping new authority. It required the development of not only completely new monitoring policies and procedures, but, in some instances, entirely new working relationships with other state agencies.

The scope of an SEA's monitoring authority over other state agencies can be very broad, depending upon how a state organizes its human services. As the following examples suggest, many different agencies provide care for handicapped children in state-operated programs. That is:

- A mental health agency, which may be either an independent agency or part of a larger state health department, generally operates state institutions serving emotionally disturbed children or youth. These are usually residential programs providing clinical treatment, education, and room and board.
- A division of mental retardation/developmental disabilities in each state operates programs for mentally retarded persons, particularly those who are severely and profoundly retarded persons. In most cases, children and adults are cared for in separate facilities that include day and residential programs. The program of care for children typically involves maintenance and education in activities of daily living.
- A state department of public welfare, or a state children's agency, operates residential facilities for dependent and neglected children. These children include those who have no parents or who have parents unable to care for them at home. Care for these children may be in foster care or residential institutions. While many of these children attend regular public school, others do not.

- A state department of corrections administers correctional facilities for youth who are in trouble with the law. Although these facilities may be called "training centers" or "schools for boys/girls," their primary mission typically is security and/or rehabilitation. These facilities are usually locked residential institutions serving youth aged 12-21.

Still other state-operated programs include children's hospitals, skilled nursing facilities for medically frail children, and schools for the deaf and blind. Thus, in any given state, an SEA may have to monitor the programs of three or four other state agencies.

SEAs' attempts to assert authority over these agencies -- many of which had been serving handicapped children during those years when they were excluded from public schools -- can pose political problems. Administrators of state-operated programs often resent that their educational programs now are accountable to an outside agency. This resentment surfaced repeatedly in the first years of P.L. 94-142's implementation. Teaching staff in these facilities (particularly when they did not meet the SEA's certification requirements) were understandably unsympathetic to many of the SEA's demands. Human service agency administrators who had to allocate new dollars to bring their programs into compliance occasionally resisted following all of the SEA's recommendations. Thus, for most SEAs, the task of monitoring these other parallel state agency programs required a gradual change over time, with progress measured over a period of years as both the SEA and the other agencies accommodated themselves to each other's goals and methods.

SEAs have used a variety of approaches to monitor educational programs administered by parallel state agencies. The three states' approaches that are described here illustrate the problems involved in monitoring as well as methods which can overcome these problems. These approaches include:

- The Minnesota Department of Education's monitoring of public welfare and correctional facilities based on written interagency agreements;
- The Arizona Department of Education's monitoring of youth correctional facilities; and
- The Virginia Department of Education's use of core standards to monitor all state-operated facilities.

Each of these is described briefly below.

A. <u>The Minnesota Department of Education's Interagency Agreements</u>

The most basic approach to monitoring another state agency's educational programs involves (1) the SEA identifying all relevant provisions of P.L. 94-142, (2) the other state agency agreeing to meet these provisions, and (3) the SEA conducting periodic monitoring visits to evaluate the degree of compliance. As is evident in Minnesota, this approach has allowed the SEA to establish its general supervision responsibility, with the parallel agencies -- the Minnesota Departments of Welfare and Corrections -- consenting to conduct their educational programs in compliance with state and federal law and regulations. Minnesota's experience is described in more detail below.

The Minnesota Department of Education entered into written agreements with two parallel state agencies

in order to ensure that educational programs run by those agencies complied with federal and state law. The programs at issue were the Minnesota Learning Center, administered by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and three correctional facilities administered by the Department of Corrections (DOC) which serve youth under age 21.

The Department of Education initiated these agreements, which specified that DPW and DOC would conduct their programs in accordance with "the State Educational Agency Standards relating to facilities, staff and supervision," and follow all applicable federal regulations. Both agencies also agreed to allow the SEA to monitor their programs and "correct deficiencies cited by the monitoring team." Finally, the agreements specified that the SEA would provide in-service training to DPW and DOC staff who provided education to handicapped children.

The agreements were signed in 1979 and 1980. Since that time, the SEA has completed one monitoring cycle for the DPW and DOC facilities. This entailed two visits, the first to discuss the criteria for monitoring, the second to actually administer these. The monitoring successfully identified deficiencies that required correction. For example, the DPW's Learning Center needed to improve in areas such as due process, privacy protection, and use of surrogate parents. After a corrective action plan was developed, the MLC took steps to come into compliance.

In the correctional facilities, the problems were more difficult: a continuum of services was not yet available in all facilities. However, the SEA and DOC are negotiating a method for correcting these deficiencies, and SEA officials believe that the substantial progress made by DOC in improving programs will continue. (For more information on Minnesota's policies, see Appendix E.)

Minnesota's monitoring procedures, based on interagency agreements, suggest several lessons about monitoring parallel state agencies. First, Minnesota's experience indicates that monitoring, by itself, usually is not sufficient to improve programs. In Minnesota, monitoring was just one part of a more comprehensive working relationship that the SEA and

the other agencies established. This on-going relationship -- particularly a general agreement on goals and educational methods -- has, over time, brought the DPW and DOC programs into compliance. Conversely, however, Minnesota's experience suggests monitoring's key role: it was the monitoring visits which identified program deficiencies and led to their correction. The leverage supplied by the monitoring process acted as a catalyst for change.

Minnesota's experience also illustrates that follow-up technical assistance is an integral part of monitoring. The Department of Education provided such assistance both before and after its actual monitoring. A pre-monitoring visit enabled DPW and DOC staff to prepare to meet the standards which they had adopted in the written interagency agreements. Similarly, the post-monitoring assistance that the SEA provided to the two agencies, including in-service training and intensive work by a Department of Education liaison staff member, largely was responsible for the speed with which deficiencies were corrected.

Finally, Minnesota's experience indicates that monitoring of some state agencies is more difficult than monitoring others. The difficulty depends on factors such as each state agency's historical ties to the SEA; the resources which each has devoted to educating handicapped children; and the conduciveness of each state agency's facilities to educational programming. State correctional facilities have

posed particular problems for SEA monitoring efforts. In Minnesota, for example, the DOC programs required more time from the SEA than the DPW facility, for all of the reasons cited above. Because correctional facilities in most states pose these problems, it is useful to look at how another SEA handled these difficulties.

B. The Arizona Department of Education's Monitoring of Youth Correctional Facilities

Correctional facilities are difficult to monitor for several reasons. Historically, they usually allocate few dollars for educational programming. Moreover, the education programs they have provided often are very basic, offering few of the related services necessary for children with handicapping conditions. Most seriously, correctional facilities usually have not perceived education as central to their mission, which is security or, in some facilities, rehabilitation. Finally, the characteristics of most correctional facilities do not lend themselves easily to compliance with certain provisions of P.L. 94-142, especially the least restrictive environment mandate.

Despite these difficulties, some SEAs have succeeded in establishing strong ties with correctional departments. Such an example is provided by the Arizona Department of Education's development of monitoring procedures for handicapped youth in correctional facilities.

> The Arizona Department of Education has been monitoring the educational programs for handicapped children in the State's correctional facilities for

several years. This has proven more difficult than the Department's monitoring of other state institutions, but the result has been improvements in the nature of education for incarcerated handicapped youth.

Development of a working relationship between the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections (DOC) began shortly after passage of P.L. 94-142. At that time, the Department of Education (DOE) hosted a meeting of all state agencies to explain the provisions of the new federal law. Shortly after this meeting DOC requested technical assistance from DOE, and a DOE staff person was assigned as liaison to the correctional programs with responsibility for helping DOC improve its programs for handicapped children in the four correctional facilities which held youth under age 21.

A first pre-monitoring visit was conducted in 1980, in order to notify DOC staff of the monitoring standards. Technical assistance was provided on issues that the SEA's staff knew were weaknesses of the correctional program, and DOC officials indicated a commitment to sustained improvement of their programming. To help DOC accomplish this goal, a change in funding was made, whereby DOC became eligible for receipt of P.L. 94-142 funds. This change was particularly helpful to DOC in giving it resources to strengthen its procedures for identifying and evaluating handicapped youth.

DOE conducted its first full monitoring visit in April, 1982. Serious difficulties were identified, particularly on issues of due process, evaluation and placement, and IEP development. The SEA helped DOC staff prepare a corrective action plan which addressed these issues, after which a second regular monitoring visit was held in January of 1983. Several deficiencies still remained, in large measure because DOC was still grappling with the difficulties of complying with federal policies in the context of a secure facility. After this visit, DOC staff prepared a corrective action plan, and DOE officials believe that this should result in full compliance in the near future.

These efforts to improve DOC's programs have been very much cooperative ones at the staff level, due to initial good working relationships and the policy commitments DOC made. DOC has continued to seek additional funds for its special education programs. In 1982, DOE gave DOC approximately $100,000 in competitively awarded, discretionary funds for

program improvements; a similar award of $160,000 is pending final approval for 1984. In addition, DOC wrote a new procedural manual for handicapped students, assisted by a special education intern on loan from DOE. DOC staff also regularly attend training sessions the SEA provides to local districts, which are designed specifically to offer feedback on information gathered during monitoring visits.

Arizona's experience demonstrates that steady program improvements can be made, even in correctional facilities, whenever state agencies jointly apply their expertise and resources to the task. Arizona's success in upgrading DOC programs grew from both agencies' sustained efforts. These involved direct technical assistance, in-service training, and targeting of additional funds for DOC programs, as well as, obviously, DOC officials' policy decision to comply with DOE standards. Monitoring activities were only one component of this more comprehensive attempt to strengthen programs, but -- as in Minnesota -- the monitoring process established clear goals for change, a structure for interagency relationships, and a system for periodically identifying remaining deficiencies. Without the pressure supplied by SEA monitoring, program improvements may not have materialized, regardless of the strength of DOC administrators' commitment.

Arizona's experience illustrates SEAs' special problems in securing compliance from correctional programs. The issue which caused most of the compliance problems was the sheer absence of programs; before the concentrated efforts of DOC and DOE, there were no special education programs for incarcerated youth. Other difficult issues were the failure

to assess all handicapped youth, inadequate IEP development, and lack of parental involvement. On most of these points, Arizona's DOC is now closer to compliance. Moreover, both DOE and DOC officials believe that program improvement will continue because a process is in place that identifies and resolves problems.

This analysis of both Minnesota's and Arizona's monitoring procedures has focussed on how these SEAs gave special attention to a specific type of state-operated program. Some SEAs have approached this monitoring task in another way, developing a generic approach to monitoring all state-operated programs. An example of such an approach is provided by the Virginia Department of Education's monitoring procedures.

C. The Virginia Department of Education's Use of Core Monitoring Standards

The Virginia Department of Education, working with other state agencies, has developed a system that integrates the monitoring requirements of the State Department of Education with the licensure and certification requirements of other state agencies.

> Four state agencies in Virginia have developed a system of "core standards" for Interdepartmental Licensure and Certification, in an attempt to make state examination of public and private residential facilities more efficient. The four agencies participating in the system include the State Departments of Education, Corrections, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Social Services.
>
> The impetus for developing the core standards came in 1979-80, when certain members of the state

legislature received complaints from operators of state-operated programs about the duplication which occurred when each state agency conducted its own on-site review. For example, one state agency might look just at a facility's physical conditions; agencies might apply different standards of personnel certification and staffing; and each state agency could adapt its own standards for program compliance. One legislator prepared draft legislation to create a new state agency responsible solely for licensure and program certification. To avert this, the four state agencies proposed an integrated review process based on "core" standards, and the legislator agreed to postpone introducing legislation until this system was developed and tested.

The four agencies convened representatives from public and private facilities to assist in developing these core standards. These standards included the basic licensure and program certification requirements that were applicable to all facilities. In addition, program "modules" were developed that could be added to the review of certain facilities as necessary. For example, the education module incorporates many of the issues necessary for the compliance monitoring of facilities that have programs for handicapped children. In addition, an administrative review component for the state-operated programs specifically addresses P.L. 94-142's requirements.

The core standards are administered by an interagency team that visits each facility annually. (If a state agency has no licensure involvement with the facility, a representative of that agency need not participate.) Usually the team spends three days at a facility. The Department of Education's representative, then, would participate in both the team review and would administer the education module to assure compliance with federal and state law. When deficiencies are noted, the facilities prepare a corrective action plan which is approved by a state agency paper review. Progress then is assessed during a subsequent on-site visit.

Initial implementation of the system has been judged a success. The major difficulty has been lack of manpower to assure participation of each department as appropriate and some variation in the application of standards by different teams visiting different facilities, but this is being changed through additional training of team members. To date, the interdepartmental licensure and certification system

seems to be satisfying the participating state agencies, the state legislature, and the state-operated and private facilities.

Virginia's system presents an unusual degree of cooperation among state agencies, and it is noteworthy that pressure from certain legislators was in large measure the source of this cooperation. While the state agencies previously had attempted some rudimentary cooperative efforts on their own, it was only when the legislators proposed creating a separate new agency for licensure and certification that the interdepartmental system was formalized and launched.

Virginia Education Department officials note that the new system offers distinct advantages in contrast to prior procedures. As one official put it, whenever SEA staff used to review facilities' education programs, they occasionally had to "step over broken glass" because their responsibility did not extend to monitoring a facility's physical conditions. By contrast, each state agency now is able to look at a child's total program because of its participation on the interdepartmental team. For example, the Department of Education team member can assist in reviewing the total treatment plan in a mental health facility rather than just the program's educational component. Similarly, when reviewing a correctional facility, the Department of Education's staff member can check a handicapped youth's physical environment as well as the available educational opportunities. Virginia Education officials believe this

attention to the total program adds to a monitoring review's substantive value and efficiency.

Virginia's system has been constructed so that it balances each agency's special needs for monitoring and licensure against the common needs of all agencies. While any one agency would probably add additional criteria or standards to the system, the combination of core standards and add-on modules seems to both assure compliance with all relevant federal and state laws and give each state agency sufficient data to assess program adequacy.

Virginia's system also appeals to the need for efficiency because state agencies and facilities find it less burdensome and less time consuming and expensive. In a climate of reduced state resources and deregulation, the savings this program anticipates in both dollars and staff time make sense.

D. Summary

The difficulties SEAs encounter in monitoring state-operated programs are best overcome when this activity is just one part of a more encompassing partnership between the SEA and another state agency. Both the Minnesota and Arizona policies this section examines illustrate the range of activities that can contribute to improvements in state-operated programs. These activities include technical assistance by SEA staff, in-service training and special funding to strengthen educational programs, as well as vigorous enforce-

ment of a corrective action plan. The successful working relationship amongst the state agencies in Minnesota and Arizona also owe much to the consistency and intensity of the SEA staffs' liaison work.

Virginia's approach to integrating compliance monitoring with the licensure and certification procedures of other state agencies represents a different way to ensure the adequacy of state-operated programs. Instead of emphasizing intensive work by the SEA with specific types of facilities, Virginia's approach stresses meeting the basic requirements of federal and state education statutes and other federal and state human service statutes. This approach views residential programming as a whole, rather than segmenting it into its component parts. It is an approach which is well-suited to state agencies who view their needs as a whole, even though it may not provide as intensive a review of educational programming as the more traditional policies pursued by Minnesota and Arizona.

V. CONCLUSION

While the two topics examined in this report -- quality monitoring and monitoring of parallel state agencies -- differ substantially from each other, they illustrate in many ways the dilemmas SEAs encounter with regard to compliance monitoring. On the one hand, SEAs have yet to accomplish all of the basic monitoring responsibilities mandated by P.L. 94-142. While most states successfully have completed a three year monitoring cycle of local education agencies -- and believe that LEAs are in substantial compliance with the federal law -- effective SEA monitoring of state-operated programs still is being developed. This lag is due to several factors: the recalcitrance of some institutional programs; the political difficulties which SEAs encounter in trying to assert authority over other state agencies; and the inherently slow pace of change for state institutional programs which had developed patterns of care over many years time. For all of these reasons, additional progress must be made before the general supervision responsibilities assigned to SEAs under P.L. 94-142 are fully carried out, and SEA monitoring policies for other state agencies reflect this.

On the other hand, SEAs are moving rapidly to advance the state-of-the-art of another dimension of monitoring: evaluation of program effectiveness, or "quality" monitoring. This movement reflects SEAs' convictions that documenting the effectiveness of special education programs is essential for their future support. The support for such documentation also

reflects LEA officials' recognition that local school boards are seeking ways to both justify educational expenditures and measure the value of educational programs. Thus, at the same time that SEAs are struggling to assure that basic educational opportunities are available to handicapped children in state-operated programs, they also have taken the leadership in developing methodologies for quality monitoring.

The dilemma in which some SEAs find themselves is that the resources to conduct monitoring are shrinking. Many SEAs have suffered cutbacks resulting from reduced federal and state funding, and SEA monitoring programs have felt the effects. SEAs in all parts of the country have had to reexamine and trim their monitoring efforts. In this type of fiscal climate, it is difficult for SEAs to pursue intensive monitoring of state-operated programs (some of which remain significantly out-of-compliance with federal law) and simultaneously invest the considerable time and resources necessary to produce quality monitoring systems. Many SEAs will have to establish priorities between these two tasks and decide which direction they most productively can pursue in the years ahead.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Program Effectiveness Evaluation for
Local Education Agencies
The Nebraska Department of Education

I. Summary

The Special Education Branch of the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has developed, over several years time, a system for evaluating the effectiveness of local special education programs. Known as Program Quality Evaluation (PQE), the system was intended to help LEAs assess their own programs, particularly with regard to issues not covered in the regular state monitoring procedures. Under PQE, LEAs have great latitude in choosing the specific evaluation questions they will use. NDE places general parameters on the evaluation methodology, but LEAs are able to tailor it to their specific needs.

The PQE systems will be field tested in 20 districts in academic year 1983-84. NDE will participate with LEAs in administrating the PQE field tests, adding this activity to the normal compliance monitoring visits scheduled for the participating districts. Eventually, NDE plans to implement this system statewide.

II. OBJECTIVES

In developing PQE, the Nebraska Department of Education had the following goals:

(1) To provide a system for LEAs that would enable them to document the quality of their programs and thus help them represent these programs to local school boards, parents, and administrators;

(2) To carry-out a Nebraska state law (Statute No. 43650) which requires that the SEA provide a "detailed description of effectiveness of program services"; and

(3) To initiate a system that eventually could yield statewide data useful to the SEA in on-going planning activities and in making policy decisions related to state special education programs.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

NDE's interest in quality evaluation is in part a response to a state mandate enacted in 1973 (Nebraska Statute No. 43650) which requires that NDE provide information to the state legislature on the effectiveness of local special education programs. In considering how best to carry-out this mandate, NDE officials became concerned that data gathered through compliance monitoring, while essential, did not provide a full picture of a local district's programs. They thus began to look for methodologies to document the qualitative aspects of local programs as well as the procedural dimensions measured by compliance monitoring.

At the same time, NDE was receiving requests from LEAs for improved methods of documenting the effectiveness of local programs. As in many states, special education administrators in Nebraska were seeking information that would be useful to them when presenting their programs to local school boards, local administrators, parents, and/or advocates.

To assist them in learning about and developing an evaluation system, NDE entered into a service agreement with the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC) to obtain technical assis-

tance in this area. In addition, in the fall of 1981, NDE established a Program Effectiveness Developmental Committee whose tasks were, first, to select a general program evaluation methodology and then to assist NDE in developing a specific evaluation system for use in Nebraska. The Committee's 20 members included LEA staff, higher education personnel, and special and general educators drawn from all geographic areas of the state.

The Developmental Committee looked at several state systems for assessing efffectiveness, but soon realized that there was no model that could be simply transferred to Nebraska. On the recommendation of MRRC staff, the Developmental Committee engaged Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff of Western Michigan University to provide additional expertise in evaluation methodology. Dr. Brinkerhoff made his materials available to the Committee, providing them with a basic model as a point of departure. The Committee then spent a good portion of its time adapting this general model to the specific interests of NDE and the Nebraska LEAs.

The model which emerged from the Committee established a series of service goals in seven major topic areas related to special programming. These areas were:*

- Administration (Relates to the internal operation of the District);
- Service Delivery (Relates to the identification of students and provision of service);

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*"A Report on the Nebraska Symposium on Program Effectiveness Evaluation", prepared by the Special Education Branch of the Nebraska Department of Education, p. 16.

- Curriculum/Materials/Facilities;
- Communication with consumers;
- Fiscal; and
- System Aspects (This pertains to the relationship between the special education programs and other programs or agencies which may be affected by handicapped students).

The general types of service goals which were identified for each area can be seen from the following examples taken from the Administration topic area:

1. Board and staff (administration, faculty, and support) roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined and implemented.

2. Personnel Management -- the recruitment, selection, appraisal, and development of staff based on program goals and needs. This includes such things as on-going supervision and feedback to staff; on-going improvement of staff skills and attitudes; and appraisal of staff designed to facilitate staff growth.

3. Program Evaluation -- evaluation and appropriate modification of the district's program -- e.g., referral, assessment, IEP, services, ultimate impact, and concurrence with regulation and statute.

4. Staff Communication -- positive, accurate exchange of information among the staff - e.g., knowledge/understanding by staff of regular special education programs, staff roles, materials, ideas, and finances; utilization of positive communication skills; and utilization of conflict resolution skills.

After these goals were established, NDE convened a symposium on Program Effectiveness Evaluation, attended by approximately 70 educators from around the state. This larger group (1) reviewed and revised the standards; (2) identified the types of information that an LEA would need in order to evaluate each of the service goals; and (3) identified potential pitfalls within each service goal.

The revised goals which emerged from this symposium are not intended to be followed verbatim by the LEAs that will eventually use the system. NDE sees its role as putting constraints or parameters on the LEAs' use of the model. That is, NDE will help LEAs determine (1) how the LEA should identify questions related to each service goal, (2) who these questions should be directed to, and (3) how the LEA will collect the necessary data. Within these general guidelines, however, the LEA will determine the specific questions to be used in its quality evaluation.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

NDE will be field testing the Program Effectiveness Evaluation model in 20 districts in the 1983-84 academic year. Use of the model will be combined with the monitoring visits that NDE staff would be conducting in any case in these districts (either maintenance monitoring visits or full compliance monitoring visits). NDE staff estimate that, in most districts, compliance monitoring will be performed during the first day of the visit; then the remaining 1-4 days will be used for testing the evaluation model.

At the conclusion of the first evaluation year, LEAs will submit an evaluation report to the state. Those LEAs participating in the field test will not have to submit a full corrective action plan as the result of the compliance monitoring visit. Instead, NDE staff want to see if some of these same issues can be addressed through the evaluation plan.

V. ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

In the words of an NDE official, the Program Effectiveness Evaluation system is designed to meet "the needs of the LEAs first, and the SEA second." Specifically, the system is expected to (1) assist LEAs in representing special education programs to local boards and commissions, and (2) identify areas in which improvements in quality can be made. NDE does expect to reap benefits from use of the system as well. First, the system should meet the requirements of the state statute, referred to above. Second, Program Effectiveness Evaluation will give NDE staff a new type of information on special education programs statewide, which should be useful in setting priorities and future NDE goals.

For more information on Nebraska's system contact:

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APPENDIX B

AN EVALUATION MODEL FOR LOCAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

AN EVALUATION MODEL FOR LOCAL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Missouri

I. SUMMARY

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is developing an evaluation model to be used by LEAs in self-assessment of their special education programs. The SEE model (Special Education Evaluation model) has been put together by the SEA, working closely with representatives from local districts. It incorporates a series of questions that address the effectiveness of local programs on six dimensions: identification of handicapped children; evaluation/diagnosis or reevaluation; IEP development; placement; IEP implementation; and annual program review.

The SEE system will be pilot tested in school year 1983-84, but Missouri has no plans to make the system mandatory for all LEAs. Instead, the system is intended to be used by LEAs that find it useful to document the effectiveness of their programs with school boards, parents, and local administrators.

II. OBJECTIVES

In developing the SEE model, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) had several objectives:

(1) First, DESE's overall goal was to improve local special education programs and services. By identifying program strengths and weaknesses, SEE should help administrators to make necessary program changes.

(2) Second, the system was intended to help LEAs justify their programs and funding. By documenting the quality of their programs in a systematic fashion, LEA administrators are in a better position to defend current funding levels or request support for program improvements.

(3) Finally, although the system is not mandatory, DESE hopes to use the feedback it provides to identify training and technical assistance needs throughout the state.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

DESE activity in developing the SEE model grew from a number of sources. For several years, DESE special education staff had been interested in quality evaluation, particularly as the result of some work on student outcomes that been done within the state. Observing this work, DESE staff became convinced that outcome data alone did not provide all the information needed by local and state administrators. They felt that a full evaluation of quality also had to address program effectiveness and to establish a relationship between the characteristics of programs and the outcomes of programs.

The interest in quality evaluation among DESE staff was reenforced by LEA requests for technical assistance in developing a quality evaluation system. LEAs wanted to be able to measure their effectiveness on dimensions that went beyond those included in the state's compliance monitoring system. LEA adminstrators believed it was particularly important to be able to document

program effectiveness when representing special education to local school boards.

As a result of this strong LEA interest in quality evaluation, DESE staff began looking at evaluation methodologies that could be used in Missouri. They were particularly impressed with the materials developed by Dr. Robert Brinkerhoff at Western Michigan University, and after hearing Dr. Brinkerhoff at an evaluation meeting convened by the Nebraska Department of Education, contracted with him to assist in the development of an evaluation model for Missouri.

To ensure that the evaluation model reflected LEA interests and concerns, DESE convened a developmental group of aproximately 20 local representatives. Beginning in February, 1983, this group met each month to develop program standards and questions within the general structure provided by Dr. Brinkerhoff's methodology. Back-up staff work for the group was provided by staff from the Midwest Regional Resource Center (MRRC), who had been working with DESE for some time around the issue of quality evaluation.

The SEE model which the group developed uses a systems approach to examine special education programs. It identifies six major components required of all special education programs (see Figure I, taken from a summary of the SEE system) and then poses questions to determine how well each of these components is functioning. For example, questions related to the third component, "IEP Development", include:

1. Do annual goals reflect student needs as specified in the present level of performance?
2. Are all needs as specified in the present level of performance listed in annual goal statements? (Why or why not?)
3. Are there annual goals that are unrelated to the present level of performance?

In each of the program areas, the SEE model will try to look at (1) resources, (2) services, (3) outcomes, and (4) feedback, and thus achieve a view of the program as it functions as a whole. (In the systems approach used by SEE, these aspects of program functioning correspond to (1) input, (2) process, (3) output and (4) feedback.) Thus, in its questions, the SEE model incorporates two dimensions: the programmatic elements shown in Figure I, and the systemic elements listed above.

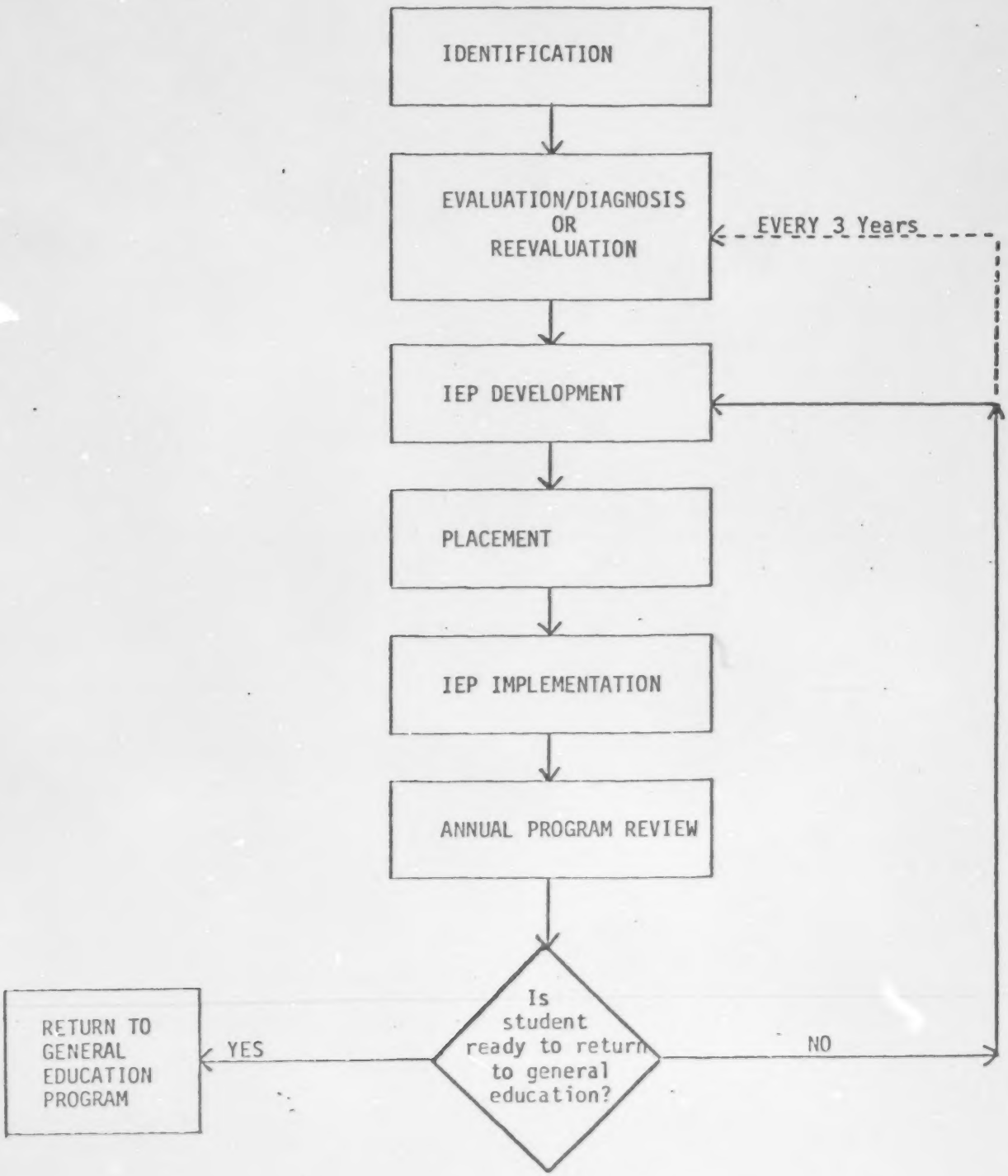
IV. IMPLEMENTATION

DESE plans to field test the SEE system in the coming school year (1983-84) in 30 volunteer LEAs. These 30 are expected to consist of approximately 50% that were represented on the developmental task force and 50% that were not. The initial evaluations may take from 1/2 to 2 years, depending on the intensity and degree of follow-up in each LEA.

Prior to the field test, more training will be provided by Dr. Brinkerhoff to DESE consultants and to the task force members in the expectation that they will in turn be able to train other LEA staff using the system. The possibility of providing a small amount of funds to the LEAs involved in the field test has been

Figure 1:

Special Education Services Flow Chart



considered by DESE, but it may not materialize because of budget constraints.

The SEE system wll be implemented separately from the state's compliance monitoring system, although DESE hopes to use the evaluation data as a complement to the monitoring data.

V. EXPECTED EFFECTS

DESE has deliberately designed the SEE system as one which depends on the interest and activity of LEAs. DESE staff believe that "evaluations of programs and service are conducted best by local personnel."* Thus, DESE has no plans to mandate the system statewide.

However, based on the LEA response to the system, DESE believes that it will have a number of effects, including:

(1) Assisting LEAs defend and promote special education programs at the local level;

(2) Giving feedback to parents in local programs; and

(3) Assisting DESE staff identify technical assistance and training needs at least among the LEAs using the data and potentially on a statewide basis.

Most importantly, DESE believes that evaluation should lead to change. In the long run, information generated by the SEE system should allow education to measure progress against goals and take action to improve services for handicapped children.

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*"Evaluation Preview Special Education Evaluation Model for Missouri", draft materials for Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, page 1.

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APPENDIX C

A SYSTEM FOR PROGRAM QUALITY EVALUATION

THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

A SYSTEM FOR PROGRAM QUALITY EVALUATION

NORTH CAROLINA

I. SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Division for Exceptional Children (DEC), has developed a system to measure the quality and effectiveness of special education programs for handicapped children throughout the state. This system, "Program Quality Evaluation" (PQE), was developed expressly for North Carolina, using input from the eight regional coordinators and other key DEC staff. Revisions to PQE were made after it was field-tested in two school systems during the 1982-83 school year. Sixteen more systems (selected from among those that responded to a state-issued RFP) will serve as pilot sites for PQE this fall. Eventually, DEC plans to combine these evaluation activities with North Carolina's ongoing compliance monitoring procedures.

II. OBJECTIVES

The Program Quality Evaluation system is designed to provide LEAs across the state with a mechanism for determining program quality. Through PQE, it will be possible "to ascertain the existence of quality in special education programs, determine educational gains of student learners in the programs, and establish specific needs for technical assistance from the state education agency."* Further, it is anticipated that data which

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*Program Quality Evaluation Manual, Preface by Theodore R. Drain, Director, Division for Exceptional Children, p. ii

the LEAs collect using PQE will not only be useful to them when justifying expenditures to local school boards, but also will be useful to the SEA when conferring with the State Board of Education and the General Assembly to report on the effectiveness of special education programs statewide.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

In 1980, in response to LEA requests for technical assistance on the topic of quality evaluation, DEC contacted other state education agencies to identify evaluation models that could be adapted for use in North Carolina. Because this area was new to almost all SEAs, DEC discovered that there were few operating models and decided to develop its own.

In the fall of 1981, a DEC staff member attended a Title VI-D meeting in Massachusetts and became familiar with evaluation designs developed by Associates in Professional Technologies, Inc. (APT), a small consulting firm in Connecticut. An APT representative subsequently met with DEC staff in North Carolina to discuss evaluation systems that could be responsive to the needs expressed by LEAs. APT prepared a proposal for system development which was submitted to the North Carolina State Board of Education and approved for a contract period from August, 1982 to June, 1983. APT took on three responsibilities for DEC: (1) the design of the Program Quality Evaluation Model and production of 500 PQE manuals; (2) the training of key DEC staff in the evaluation process to enable them to provide technical assistance as needed to LEAs; and (3) the modification of the model/manual based on pre- and post-test data analysis from two field-tests

which were conducted in Pitt and Union County school systems. Throughout the system development process, APT and DEC staff, through an Advisory Committee, worked closely together. The total cost of APT's development of PQE, a system not previously used in any other SEA, was $43,000.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

PQE is a goal-based program and includes goals in three main areas: Determining Learner Gains/Outcomes; Locating and Evaluating Learners; and Placing Learners Appropriately. For each of these areas, PQE establishes program objectives and specific evaluation questions. For example, part of the sequence within the first goal area is as follows:

> Goal 1: Students will make satisfactory progress in the specific curriculum areas in which they are enrolled and develop a positive self-image for learning and work.
>
> > Objective 1.1: Students successfully demonstrate competencies in appropriate curriculum areas at levels commensurate with ability and handicapping condition.
> >
> > > Evaluation Question 1.1.1: Are reading competencies attained commensurate with students' abilities and handicapping conditions?
> > > - Vocabulary
> > > - Comprehension
> > >
> > > Evaluation Question 1.1.4: Are vocational competencies attained commensurate with students' abilities and handicapping conditions?

For each of the specific evaluation questions, LEAs are expected to establish a numerical standard to measure satisfactory program performance. For example, for Evaluation Question 1.1.1 above, an LEA could decide that 80% of students in a program should attain the desired reading competencies. For Evaluation Question 1.1.4 above, the numerical standard could be 60%. In other

words, the standards set by each LEA can vary from question to question, and different LEAs will set their standards at different levels, reflecting varying expectations of local programs. Eventually, DEC may assist LEAs in setting these numerical standards using data obtained statewide to ensure that LEAs do not set expectation levels too low.

DEC will be implementing the Program Quality Evaluation Model on a pilot basis in 16 (out of 142) LEAs during the 1983-84 school year. These LEAs will be competitively selected; DEC has issued materials for a PQE Incentive Grant Program which will provide funds to assist with the implementation of the self-study evaluation. Grants will be awarded in amounts from $2,000 to $10,000 based on the December 1, 1982, handicapped headcount in the LEA. Applications will be reviewed by an Incentive Grant Review Committee (composed of DEC staff) and notification of funding for the sixteen selected sites will be made following State Board of Education approval in October, 1983.

An initial meeting of the local directors from the sixteen pilot sites will be conducted in November of this year, during the 35th Annual Conference on Exceptional Children. During November and December the DEC Regional Coordinators will conduct in-service training for the local personnel, and the sixteen pilot LEAs will implement the Program Quality Evaluation model from January to April, 1984.

Following implementation, each of the sixteen pilot LEAs will submit a management plan to DEC to report the findings of their evaluation and to describe any corrective actions they

believe necessary. The management plan will specify timelines to correct deficiencies and address areas of high priority. A meeting is planned for June, 1984, to allow local directors from the sixteen pilot sites to share experiences and offer recommendations for further PQE implementation.

V. EFFECTS

It is anticipated that, through their participation in the PQE process, LEAs will have qualitative data for use with their local school boards to help gain program support and to acquire needed funds. In addition, LEAs using PQE will be able to note program deficiencies more readily and to correct them.

The SEA, by examining LEA management plans, will be able to note state-wide trends which should prove useful in determining SEA staff training needs and in planning LEA in-service training. The data obtained by DEC should also allow eventual evaluation of state expenditures in terms of program outcomes.

DEC has already engaged in some nationwide dissemination activities and is planning others. It has distributed a copy of its PQE manual to every SEA, each RRC, and many national organizations, as well as to other interested parties upon request. In February, 1984, DEC staff will conduct a two-day workshop on PQE at the CEC Topical Conference on Program Evaluation to be held in Tampa, Florida.

For more information, contact:

The Division for Exceptional Children
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602
(919) 733-3921

APPENDIX D

PROGRAM REVIEW

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

California's Program Review system is described on pages 1-11 of this chapter. To better illustrate the nature of the system, sample materials from California's Program Review Handbook are attached. For additional information on California's system, contact:

Mr. Jack Hazecamp
California Department of Education
6th Floor, 721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California

(916) 323-4758

PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE SELPA PROGRAM REVIEW

Purpose of Program Review

The primary purpose of program review, whether it is an internal review or one conducted by an outside agency, is to improve the effect of instruction on the student. It is a means for developing and sustaining a high-quality educational program for each student.

Program review can be an integral part in the program improvement cycle of planning, translating the planned program into action, evaluating the degree of implementation of the program, and modifying the program accordingly. Program review findings can be of value in discussions and decision making about the design and implementation of programs. In short, the program review process yields information that is essential to effective program development--information about what is working well and why and what should be changed and how.

Uses of This Handbook

The program review process described in this handbook is designed to complement, not replace, the existing ongoing planning and evaluation processes in a school, SELPA, or agency. Reviewers should make use of all evaluative information developed within the SELPA/agency and use this handbook as a framework for organizing the information.

Reviews conducted by reviewers from outside the SELPA can provide a fresh viewpoint and independent validation of internal review findings. Toward this end, the program review conducted for the State Department of Education by a state review team will be based on this handbook. A school, SELPA, or agency can use all or part of this handbook over a longer period of time to evaluate its own program. Such use of this handbook by the people at a school, SELPA, or agency prior to a state-conducted review can be extremely effective in helping to improve the local program. Familiarity with the review criteria and procedures in this handbook will help staff and parents communicate effectively with reviewers and will help reviewers obtain the data they need to make informed judgments.

Process of Program Review

This section describes sequentially how a program review is conducted by a State Department of Education review team. While the description and instructions are directed primarily toward reviewers who are members of a state-conducted review team, the school, SELPA, or agency may adopt, as appropriate, parts of this process for use in self-review. Appendix A contains three checklists of responsibilities for team members, team leaders, and the SELPA/agency which give more detailed information about the process.

Review of the Local Plan

The local plan for special education is the first contact the reviewer has with the procedures, policies, and programs implemented in the SELPA/agency. The team leader will review the plan for a thorough understanding of the SELPA/agency's goals and implementation processes, prior to interviews in the SELPA/agency or school site visits. The contents of the plan will them be discussed with the review team.

Initial Team Meeting

The team of reviewers will meet together, usually the night before the review begins, to:

- Discuss the local plan.
- Discuss SELPA/agency and school information presented by the team leader.
- Review major findings of previous reviews.
- Plan strategies for the review.
- Define reviewer roles and responsibilities.
- Designate meeting times during the review to "touch base" and share perceptions, and develop the SELPA/agency final report.
- Review the scheduled visits.
- Get to know each other's interests and strengths.

Collecting Information

In finding out about the quality of the school and SELPA/agency procedures, the reviewers use three basic review methods. They are (1) classroom observation; (2) interviews--both formal and informal; and (3) the review of records and documents. Each of these methods is used in conjunction with the others to verify information and findings. For example, by talking with the teacher and students about the observed activities, the reviewer can verify the accuracy and completeness of his or her observations.

Classroom Observation

Through classroom observation, the reviewer gathers basic information about the school program. The reviewer visits the regular classrooms, special day classrooms, resource specialist programs, and other rooms or areas where education and related services are provided to individuals with exceptional needs.

Classroom observations include informal interviews with students and staff, based upon what has been observed.

Interviews

Interviews are an extremely important source of information about the program. The basic information gained through classroom observation and review of records and documents is verified, clarified, and expanded through the interview process. Interviews enable the reviewers to learn how the program was developed, how it is being implemented, and how it could be improved. Students, parents, teachers, resource specialists, program specialists, administrators, and other service providers are interviewed.

Interviews serve the following major purposes:

- To verify data obtained from other sources
- To collect data not yet gathered from other sources
- To resolve discrepancies in data collected
- To give people an opportunity to share past experiences, present realities, or future plans
- To give people an opportunity to ask questions
- To generate ideas about how the program could be improved

Review of Records and Documents

Information gathered through classroom observations and interviews is verified, expanded, and clarified through the review of such records as:

- Referral notices, assessment plans, and assessment data
- Individualized education programs (IEPs)
- Minutes of school site council/school advisory committee/community advisory committee meetings
- Contracts or agreements with other agencies
- Evaluations of staff development and parent education activities
- Lesson plans and therapy records
- Newsletters and other communications to parents and the community
- Procedure and policy handbooks
- Program evaluation information, including self-review findings

Parent and Community Input Meeting

A parent and community input meeting is scheduled for one afternoon or evening during the review. Often this meeting is scheduled in conjunction with a meeting of the community advisory committee (CAC) to provide its members an opportunity to discuss activities and goals of the CAC. During this time members community will have an opportunity to voice their opinions regarding any aspect of the special education program. This information will be used in making determinations about the program's strengths and needs, as well as suggestions for improvement.

Identification of Effective Programs and Practices

Throughout the review, as team members learn about effective practices and programs, they will complete an abstract describing that practice or program, using the form in Appendix D. These abstracts will be compiled each year by the quality program unit and made available to local education agencies.

Final School Report

Generally, two reviewers will spend two days collecting data at each large school site (less time at the smaller school sites). At the conclusion of the data collection at each site, the team members will deliver an informal oral report to the school reflecting whether or not standards have been met, areas of strengths and needs, indications of noncompliance, suggestions for improvement, and suggestions for refinement.

Final Team Meeting

All team members will meet together, usually the evening before and the last day of the review, to wrap up the final oral report to the SELPA/agency. At this time team members agree upon whether or not the standards have been met, areas of strengths and needs, and findings of noncompliance. They also develop suggestions for improving a program which has not met the standards and suggestions for refining practices or programs which have met the standards.

Final SELPA/Agency Report

On the last day of the review, team members deliver the final oral report first, informally to the SELPA administration and second, formally, to the SELPA, district, school staffs, and community. The same findings of the review team are incorporated into a final written report and sent back to the SELPA within 20 working days of completion of the review. The final report is described in more detail later in this handbook.

PART II: ORGANIZATION OF THE HANDBOOK

This chapter explains the format of the Program Review Handbook. This year in the program review we are interested in four main areas:

1. Referral/assessment
2. Individualized education program (IEP) development
3. Placement and IEP implementation
4. Administration

The first three areas will be used at the school level, and the last area will be used at the SELPA/agency level. For each area, criteria (standards) have been developed, reflecting what is expected to exist in any program. The criteria include standards taken directly from federal or state laws and regulations, as well as standards representing basic common sense or good practices. Each school/SELPA/agency is measured against the criteria to determine strengths and needs of the program, and areas of noncompliance. The criteria are written in the form of paragraphs, which appear in the center of pages 7, 13, 18, and 24.

Each set of criteria is structured around four "organizers," which are consistent throughout all criteria. The organizers are:

1. Procedures/documentation
2. Staff involvement
3. Parent/student involvement
4. Staff development

Each organizer is a separate paragraph. Within each organizer, the "key ideas" are capitalized. For example, in the first paragraph of the criteria for "Referral/Assessment," you will see the words "ONGOING PROCESS TO FIND" all in capital letters, reflecting the first key idea within the organizer "procedures/documentation."

In the criteria for "Administration," the organizers are the key ideas.

Following each criterion are "Areas and Sources." These are questions developed to help the reviewer collect data. To the right of each question is a grid indicating where the reviewer should go to find the answer to the question. Sources include: O - Observation, D - Documentation, R - Regular teachers, instructional aides, site principal, special program teachers (e.g., Chapter 1, Miller-Unruh), S - Special education teachers, aides, DIS, P - Parents (and students with exceptional needs as appropriate), A - SELPA/agency administration, I - Interview administration, PR - Pupil records. An observation guide, record review guide, and interview guides for regular and special education staff, parents, students and administrators containing questions as indicated in the grid will be used by reviewers to collect information.

Questions are numbered consistently in the guides for cross-referencing. The first digit indicates the criterion or chapter number:

1 = Referral/assessment
2 = IEP development
3 = Placement and IEP implementation
4 = Administration

The second digit indicates the number of the main question (taken directly from each of the criteria). The third and fourth digits indicate sub-questions necessary to answer the main question. The number in parentheses after the question is a cross reference to related questions in other criteria chapters.

The fourth part of the handbook includes the format for the final report, a sample final report, and a description of both the final school report and the final SELPA report.

PART III: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

CHAPTER 1: REFERRAL/ASSESSMENT

There is an ONGOING PROCESS TO FIND unserved and inadequately served children, birth through twenty-one years of age. Attempts have been made to MODIFY THE REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM before referring the student for special education. REFERRALS ARE PROCESSED FOR ALL potential special education students within the required time lines. Assessment materials and procedures are NONDISCRIMINATORY. The assessment team includes PERSONNEL APPROPRIATELY TRAINED to administer and interpret test results. Each child is ASSESSED WHEN REQUESTED by the child's teacher or parent. INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS are considered by the IEP team. An ASSESSMENT PLAN is developed as a result of referral. WRITTEN PARENTAL CONSENT is obtained prior to assessment. The student is ASSESSED IN ALL AREAS related to the suspected disability. NO SINGLE PROCEDURE is the sole criterion for determining placement of the individual. ASSESSMENT is COMPLETED and a REPORT IS WRITTEN before the IEP meeting.

Assessment is conducted by a MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM, including a specialist in the area of suspected disability. Most STAFF UNDERSTAND AND USE the referral/assessment process. Assessment RESULTS ARE SHARED with IEP team at or before the meeting.

PARENTS AND the COMMUNITY are informed that they CAN MAKE REFERRALS. PARENTS ARE NOTIFIED that their child has been referred for assessment and possible special education services. Parents are informed of all DUE PROCESS RIGHTS.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION BASED ON NEEDS ASSESSMENTS have been provided in the area of referral/assessment.

1.0 REFERRAL/ASSESSMENT

Areas and Sources

Procedures/Documentation	O	D	R	S	P	A	*
1.1.0 What is the ONGOING PROCESS TO FIND unserved and inadequately served children, birth through twenty-one years of age? [E.C. 56300, 34 CFR 300.220] (4.1.4)						x	
1.1.1 Tell me about the process to find and refer students who might need special education. [E.C. 56300; E.C. 56301; E.C. 56302; 34 CFR 300.220] (4.1.5)			x	x	x		
1.1.2 Do you understand how to use the referral process?			x	x	x		
1.2.0 What attempts have been made to MODIFY THE REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM before referring the student for special education? [E.C. 56303]							
1.2.1 What kinds of strategies do you use to help the child before you refer? Do you get assistance from the special education personnel in developing strategies? (4.1.5.1; 4.1.5.2)			x			x	
1.2.2 Are programs such as Chapter 1 (Title I) utilized before referral? (4.1.5.8)			x			x	
1.2.3 How do you assist the regular education teacher before the referral?				x			
1.2.4 What kinds of things did the school do to give your child extra help before he or she was referred? [E.C. 56303] (4.1.5.1)					x		
1.2.5 Did the school talk to you about your child's problem before referral?					x		
1.2.6 Do records verify that efforts were made to modify the regular program before referral? [E.C. 56303] (4.1.5.2)		x				x	
1.3.0 Are REFERRALS PROCESSED FOR ALL potential special education students within the required time lines? [E.C. 56321(a)] (4.1.5.5)							
1.3.1 By what procedure can you verify that referrals for assessment of need for special education services have been appropriately processed? [E.C. 56302] (4.1.5.5)						x	

*CODE: O=Observation/Students D=Documentation R=Regular Staff
S=Special Education Staff P=Parents A=Administration

	O	D	R	S	P	A
1.3.2 What is your procedure for assessing infants (ages birth to three years)? [E.C. 56300; E.C. 56301] (4.1.6.1)				x		x
1.3.3 What is the system for transmitting the referral to the appropriate personnel? [E.C. 56302] (4.1.5.7)						x
1.3.4 Is there a handbook or other written document describing the referral/assessment process? [E.C. 56220(a); E.C. 56301] (4.1.0)		x	x	x	x	x
1.3.5 Is there a procedure for documenting/monitoring referral/assessment time lines? (4.1.5.10)		x				x
1.3.6 Who keeps track of the time line that begins upon receipt of a referral? [E.C. 56321] (4.1.5.5)				x		
1.3.7 How were you informed that your child was referred for special education? (4.1.5.6)					x	
1.3.8 About how long after the referral was made was the IEP meeting held? [E.C. 56344] (4.1.5.10)					x	
1.3.9 How long after that did placement occur? [E.C. 56344]					x	
1.4.0 Are assessment materials and procedures NONDISCRIMINATORY? [E.C. 56320(a)] (4.1.6)						x
1.4.1 Do assessment procedures include provision for nondiscriminatory assessment (e.g., sexual, cultural, linguistic)? [E.C. 56320(a)] (4.1.6.2)		x				x
1.5.0 Does the assessment team include PERSONNEL APPROPRIATELY TRAINED to administer and interpret test results? [E.C. 56320(b)(3)] (4.1.6.2)		x				
1.6.0 Are ASSESSMENTS conducted WHEN REQUESTED by the child's parent or teacher? [E.C. 56381] (4.1.6.1)		x				x
1.7.0 Are INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS CONSIDERED by the IEP team? [E.C. 56329(b)] (4.1.6.7)		x				x
1.8.0 As a result of referral, is an ASSESSMENT PLAN developed within 15 days? [E.C. 56321(a)] (4.1.6)		x				x
1.8.1 How do you use the information on the referral form to write the assessment plan? (4.1.6.4)				x		

	O	D	R	S	P	A
1.9.0 Is PARENT CONSENT obtained before initial assessment? [34 CFR 300.504(b)(1)(i) E.C. 56321(a-c)] (4.1.6.5)		x				x
1.9.1 Did you give written consent before the school began testing your child? [34 CFR 300.504(b)(1)(i) E.C. 56321] (4.1.6.5)					x	
1.9.2 Did you understand what would happen after you signed the assessment plan? (E.C. 56321(3)) (4.1.6.5)					x	
1.10.0 What is done to ensure that the STUDENT IS ASSESSED IN ALL AREAS related to the suspected disability? [E.C. 56320(f)] (4.1.6)		x				
1.11.0 How does the assessment process ensure that NO SINGLE PROCEDURE is the sole criterion for determining placement? [E.C. 56320(e)] (4.1.6)		x				
1.12.0 Are ASSESSMENTS always COMPLETED and a REPORT WRITTEN before the IEP meeting? [E.C. 56320; E.C. 56327] (4.1.6.6)		x				x
1.12.1 How and when are you informed of the results of the assessment? (4.1.6.6)			x	x		
Staff Involvement						
1.13.0 Are assessments conducted by a MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM, including a specialist in the area of suspected disability? [E.C. 56322(a)] (4.1.6.2)		x				
1.14.0 Do STAFF UNDERSTAND AND effectively USE the assessment process? [300a.380(b); E.C. 56300; E.C. 56301] (4.1.6)						x
1.14.1 Tell me about your assessment process. (4.1.6)				x		
1.15.0 How are assessment RESULTS SHARED with the IEP team at or before the meeting?						
1.15.1 How do you ensure that all IEP team members understand the assessment results when they come to the meeting? (4.1.6)				x		
Parent/Student Involvement						
1.16.0 How are PARENTS AND the COMMUNITY informed that they CAN MAKE REFERRALS? [E.C. 56506(b); E.C. 56302] (4.1.4; 4.1.5)						x

	O	D	R	S	P	A
1.16.1 How have you been informed that you can make a referral for special education? [E.C. 56506(b); E.C. 56301]					x	
1.17.0 Are PARENTS NOTIFIED that their child has been referred for assessment and possible special education services? [E.C. 56321(a)] (4.1.5.6; 4.1.6.3)					x	
1.17.1 Are forms signed by the parent verifying consent available on each child assessed? [E.C. 56321(a); E.C. 56321(c)] (4.1.6.5)		x				
1.17.2 Are the proposed assessment plans in language easily understood by the general public, in the primary language (or mode of communication) of the parent, and do the plans include other required components? [E.C. 56321(a-c)] (4.1.6.5)		x				
1.18.0 Have parents been informed of all DUE PROCESS RIGHTS, including the right to an independent assessment? [E.C. 56301; E.C. 56321] (4.1.6.5; 4.8.3)						x
1.18.1 How are parents informed of their due process rights? [E.C. 56301; E.C. 56321] (4.1.6.5)				x		
1.18.2 How did the school help you understand your legal rights? [E.C. 56301; E.C. 56321; E.C. 56329(b)] (4.8.3)					x	
Staff Development						
1.19.0 Have STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION BASED ON NEEDS ASSESSMENTS been provided in the area of referral/assessment? (4.13.3; 4.13.9)						
1.19.1 Has staff in-service training been held in areas such as the right to refer and referral and assessment processes? [E.C. 56241(a)] (4.13.9)						x
1.19.2 Did you receive any in-service training on the referral/assessment processes? [E.C. 56241(a)(b); E.C. 56243 E.C. 56301] (4.13.9)			x	x		x
1.19.3 Have you received any in-service training on eligibility criteria? (4.1.5.4)			x			
1.19.4 Has parent/community education been conducted? [E.C. 56220(c)(2); E.C. 56240] (4.1.4)					x	

APPENDIX E

MONITORING OF OTHER STATE AGENCY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

MINNESOTA

MONITORING OF OTHER STATE AGENCY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

MINNESOTA

SUMMARY

The Minnesota State Department of Education (DoE) has entered into interagency agreements with the State Department of Corrections (DOC) and the State Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to carry out the SEA's mandate for general supervision of all educational programs for handicapped children in the state. Through these written agreements, DOC and DPW agree that the educational programs in the facilities which they operate will meet all the requirements of state and federal law and that DoE has the authority to conduct compliance monitoring of these facilities.

OBJECTIVES

In entering into agreements with DOC and DPW, the state education agency had three basic goals:

(1) To improve the overall quality of educational services for handicapped students placed in the facilities operated by the two agencies;

(2) To ensure compliance of these programs with state and federal laws; and

(3) To establish an on-going mechanism to identify program deficiencies and a method for their correction through technical assistance and in-service training.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

Even prior to passage of P.L. 94-142, the Minnesota Department of Education had been responsible, under state law,

for the education of all handicapped children in the state (ages 4-21), regardless of agency placement. But while DOC and DPW had been meeting the requirements of P.L. 89-750 and P.L. 89-313 respectively, the Commissioner of Education realized that, to comply with the additional provisions of P.L. 94-142, more needed to be done. Thus, the federal law provided the impetus for DoE to develop interagency agreements with both DPW and DOC to address the needs of institutionalized handicapped children.

Negotiation of these agreements between DoE and the other two state agencies proceeded smoothly. The biggest concerns were raised by DOC staff, and these related to the extensive new rules surrounding development of an IEP. To resolve this and other issues, operational level staff from both DOC and DPW met frequently with their counterparts at DoE to discuss the kinds of educational activities that had to be strengthened in the institutions, the support needed from DoE, and the standards to be included in each of the agreements. Supervisory personnel (Assistant Commissioners) from each agency reviewed this work before the agreements were drafted and presented to the Commissioners for final approval and signature. The DOC agreement was signed in 1979; the DPW agreement in 1980.

With these agreements, DoE achieved the necessary degree of supervision over all state operated programs. The educational programs at the Minnesota Learning Center (operated by DPW), and those administered in DOC's three facilities that

serve youth are the only programs monitored by SEA staff directly. The educational programs of all other state facilities are monitored by the appropriate local education agency (LEA) because they are operated and staffed with public school personnel from the district in which they are geographically situated.

When conducting compliance reviews of the educational programs at the correctional facilities and the Minnesota Learning Center (MLC), the SEA uses basically the same procedures it does when conducting LEA compliance monitoring. Some changes, as appropriate, are made to the standard form and instruments found in the compliance manual developed by the Division of Special and Compensatory Education.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICIES

Prior to initiating new monitoring procedures with DOC and DPW, the SEA monitoring staff held discussions with appropriate agency personnel to clarify the standards requiring adherence and provide guidance for responsive program design. Then during the 1980-81 school year, the first monitoring visits to the three DOC facilities and the MLC were conducted. These initial visits did not adhere strictly to the SEA's compliance monitoring format; instead, they more closely resembled a technical assistance visit to the facilities. With input from staff at each of the facilities, program guidelines and plans for implementation of program improvements were developed.

At the MLC operated by the Department of Public Welfare, the areas that needed improvement to assure compliance with P.L. 94-142 were primarily procedural in nature, e.g., due process and parent rights procedures, team decision-making, and so forth. Assessment procedures and IEP development also required some attention there. The situation at the DOC facilities proved more difficult: basic educational programs reflecting a continuum of services for handicapped youth needed to be established. IEP development required attention as well as the more procedural requirements of the law. Following the first visit, on-site consultation was provided to all the facilities by DoE staff. Copies of materials with positive examples were sent to each agency to illustrate ways of correcting procedural deficiencies. Staff were also invited to attend the regularly-scheduled LEA in-service activities which focused upon skill improvement in a number of these areas.

In February of 1983, the SEA monitoring staff conducted a more formal monitoring visit at the MLC (technically, this was the second on-site compliance visit to this facility). During this visit, positive note was made of the transition work being done by MLC outreach workers, who travel to LEAs to provide them with pertinent data on children returning to the community. However, the areas of due process, privacy protection, and surrogate parents were noted as out of compliance. (The weakness related to surrogate parents was the result of a change in the state statute.) To assist in

correcting these deficiencies, the SEA has offered on-site technical assistance, sent exemplary materials, and continued to invite DPW staff to LEA in-service activities. In short, strong on-going communication exists between the SEA and MLC staff. The SEA monitoring office has approved the Corrective Action Plan which was submitted by DPW in response to the February visit and as a result of appropriate follow-up measures, the MLC is now in compliance.

The second, more formal compliance visits to the three correctional facilities were conducted in the fall of the 1982-83 school year. While much progress was noted, substantive program deficiencies remained. Full implementation of a continuum of services was not yet apparent in all institutions -- for example, a functional model was still being used by one. The population had so declined in one facility that there was little real overall programming. Another area presenting difficulties for the correctional facilities was, and continues to be, parental permission for assessment. Every time a youth is transferred within the correctional system, the permission process must be repeated, and consent from real or surrogate parents for assessment is hard to obtain.

While the Corrective Action Plan submitted by DOC after these SEA visits has not yet been approved, the SEA Monitoring Office Manager and the DOC Coordinator of Educational Programming (who has overall responsibility for the educational programs of all the correctional facilities) are working together to ameliorate these deficiencies. The SEA

provides on-going consultation and material sharing. DOC staff, like DPW's, are included in relevant LEA in-service training activities. Presently, on-site consultation and information exchange is being provided to the state correctional facility administrators by the SEA.

The DPW and DOC facilities are on a three-year monitoring cycle. The follow-up reviews for the DOC facilities are scheduled for fiscal year 1985, although the actual date for the return visits will be determined by the amount of agency contact and progress noted. One area noted for possible procedural change, based on experiences thus far, may be visit length. Presently two staff members from the SEA monitoring division conduct a one-day visit. Feedback suggests two to three days may be necessary. Each of the interagency agreements which authorize these SEA monitoring activities is reviewed yearly by the appropriate Commissioners, so needed changes may be incorporated.

EFFECTS

To date, SEA officials have found the overall effect of these agreements to be extremely beneficial. For example, since implementing the agreements, all teaching personnel in the four facilities are State Board of Education certified. Generally, the results from the monitoring activities have allowed for more responsive consultation and information exchange, and the needs of the facilities are now considered by the SEA when developing LEA and regional in-service

training activities. Using a technical assistance approach, a method for problem identification and resolution has been implemented. Many deficiencies have been corrected and the working relationships now established are being used for joint problem solving where weaknesses remain.